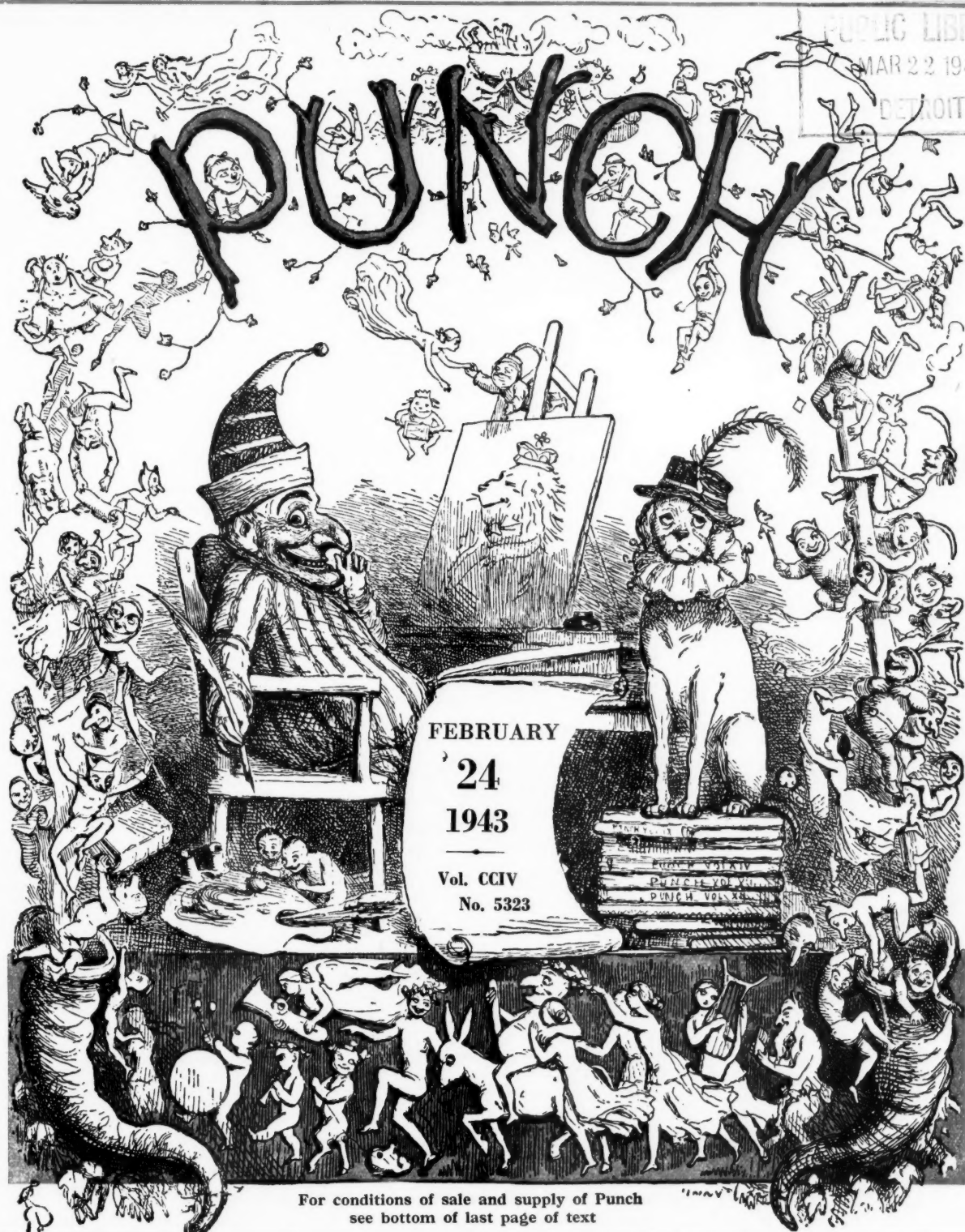


WINNERS
ON
POINTS

HUNTLEY & PALMERS BISCUITS

SUCCESS
THROUGH
QUALITY



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text



Player's Please



shield over freedom



Over Dunkirk — too few
 Over Singapore — too few
 Over Crete — too few
 But the factories hummed,
 and the people toiled ;
 more planes,
 more planes
 thousands
 Squadron after Squadron—
 roaring into the sky !
 Layer above layer !
 Far below—
 like toy ships on a floor—
 The Convoy
 Shield over the Convoy—
 The Stukas slink away—
 the Convoy goes on !
 Shield, over Malta
 —Malta, the indomitable
 Shield over the Eighth Army,
 crashing to Victory.
 Shield over the Great Fleet,
 steaming to Algiers.
 And some day—
 shield over Europe while
 the Nazi hordes go
 rolling back
 and our boys go charging
 forward to free the nations.
 Shield over
 Freedom !
 More Planes.

MORE PLANES.

Soon you will have a special chance to show your gratitude to the boys who fly these planes. Wherever you live your Local Savings Committee is making plans for its "Wings for Victory" Week. Go all out to help your town or district get its target and win its Victory Wings. Let your savings soar. This is the least you can do for those who have done so much for you. **SAVE MORE.**

BELTING

Machinery Belting for Driving and Conveying. Endless Belts for British, American and Continental Machine Tools.

MINTEX

Brake and Clutch Linings for all Industrial Machinery, Aircraft and Road Vehicles.

ASBESTOS

Yarns, Cloths, Tapes and Lagging, Packings and Jointings.

Wherever quality can ensure efficiency, safety and reliability, you may expect to find B.B.A. Products.

BRITISH BELTING & ASBESTOS LTD.
 CLECKHEATON, YORKSHIRE

GLENFIELD

HYDRAULIC CONTROL VALVES

The "Homeyard" Patent Hydraulic Control Valve introduced by us some years ago marked a great advance in hydraulic pressure control, and the many engineers familiar with it in its various forms and applications agree that it comes very near to being the ideal hydraulic control valve.

This claim, so often made, is rarely so fully justified. Our technical publication "Modern Hydraulic Control Valves" gives details of "Homeyard" Valves, Stop Valves, Check Valves, Reducing and other Hydraulic Valves made by us. Copies of this publication will be sent to responsible enquirers post free on request.

Glenfield

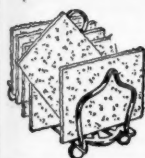
GLENFIELD AND KENNEDY LIMITED KILMARNOCK

Five reasons why you should budget points for Vita-Weat

Vita-Weat is a really valuable as well as a delicious food that will help to maintain your wartime health and efficiency, and here are five medical reasons why you should allocate some points regularly to the purchase of this excellent crispbread.

- 1 Vita-Weat contains Vitamins A, D, B₁ and B₂, which help you to resist infection, build good teeth and bones, and keep your digestive and nervous systems in sound working order.
- 2 Vita-Weat contains iron, the mineral element that helps to overcome anaemia and fatigue.
- 3 Vita-Weat is excellent for the teeth.
- 4 Vita-Weat gives you roughage to encourage regular habits.
- 5 The calorie (or 'energy') value of Vita-Weat is nearly double that of wholemeal bread.

This is the 3rd week of rationing No. 8



Vita-Weat

REGD.
THE HEALTH CRISPREAD

PACKETS 1/6 • LOOSE 1/4 lb. (Equal to two pre-war 10d. packets and costing only ONE POINT!)

Made by Peek Frean & Co. Ltd., Makers of famous biscuits



"You Dirty Boy." The famous Pears Soap Sculpture

A very old and honourable friend of the family is being missed by a great number of people. Pears Transparent Soap will be only a rare visitor until the War is over, and then what a welcome this most stimulating and refreshing of friends will receive.

Pears

TRANSPARENT SOAPS

A. & F. Pears Ltd.

TP 257/180

The World's most famous Collar



World-wide fame does not come undeserved. Van Heusen's popularity is due to *comfort and style*; they launder well and last longer.



"VAN HEUSEN"

Regd. Trade Mark

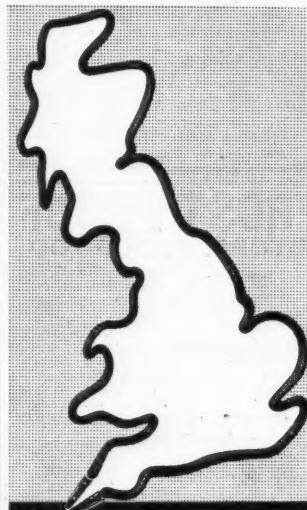
SEMI-STIFF COLLARS

Sole Manufacturers: Harding, Tilton and Hartley, Ltd., Taunton, Somerset.

A LITTLE
MARMITE
MEANS A LOT
OF GOODNESS
AND FLAVOUR

FOR SOUPS, STEWS,
GRAVIES & SAVOURY
SANDWICHES

For neat appearance and the worthwhile qualities of strength and durability PATON'S BRITISH LACES are the best in the land.



A NATIONAL SAVING
PATON'S SHOE & BOOT LACES
FOR LASTING WEAR

FROM YOUR RETAILER—3d. to 6d. PER PAIR
WM. PATON LTD. JOHNSTONE SCOTLAND

LODGE

The Spitfire plug



played a vital part
in
THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Barling

PIPE CRAFT

Manufactured
entirely in
London, Eng.

Take care
of your Barling
Pipe. Supplies are
extremely limited, conse-
quently difficult to obtain.

When available, prices are as follows:—

Index of Sizes clearly marked on each stem.	Standard	S.S.	S.M.	L.	E.L.
or Sandblast	10/6	13/6	16/6	20/-	25/-
Te Oldie Wood	S.S.	S.M.	L.	E.L.	
Selected Grains	15/6	18/6	21/6	25/-	

Letters S.S., S.M., L., E.L., on each pipe
indicate sizes—Small-Small, Small-
Medium, Large and Extra Large.

B. BARLING & SONS, EST. IN LONDON 1812.
"Makers of the World's Finest Pipes"

FROST PROOF
STORM PROOF TOO



Under Chase Cloches
your seeds and crops
are protected against
frost or storm danger.
Vegetables grow
more quickly under
Cloches, giving time
for an extra crop. Cloches increase your
output on the same space, soon pay for
themselves and with care last a lifetime.
Prices and full particulars sent on request.

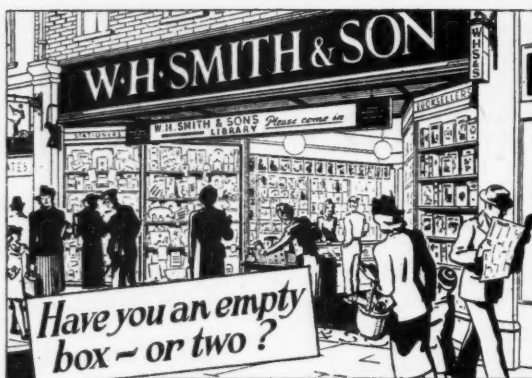
Chase
Continuous Cloches

CHASE LTD., Abbey Rd., CHERTSEY, Surrey

Pedigree
Pets

DOLLS
AND
SOFT
TOYS

P.S.T. LTD. London



The first would be for the papers that your newsagent delivers—in those districts where messengers can still be obtained. If each customer, especially in the country and where houses are set well back from the road, would fix a newspaper box at his gate so that the delivery boy need not go right up to the front door, some rounds could be stretched a little and a few more people relieved of the trouble of fetching their own papers.

The second box we have in mind—or better still a depot—is for collecting and passing on papers and magazines when they are done with. Newsagents cannot very well undertake this work themselves, for obvious reasons, but none know better than they how many people are going without because of paper-rationing. Hospitals, and men and women in the Forces, would particularly appreciate a good-neighbourly action such as this. Please share your newspapers and magazines when they are salvaged.

W. H. SMITH & SON LTD. Head Office: STRAND HOUSE, LONDON, W.C. 2

Take care of your hair!

Your scalp should be loose on your skull if you want to avoid scurf, dandruff and unhealthy hair. A tight scalp causes these things. Every day, night and morning, a few seconds' massage of the scalp with your finger tips will stimulate blood circulation to your hair roots and do much to keep your scalp loose and healthy. Round off the treatment with a very few drops of Brylcreem every few days. Brylcreem is scarce, so when you have a bottle use it very sparingly.

BRYLCREEM

THE PERFECT HAIR DRESSING

County Perfumery Co., Ltd., North Circular Road, West Twyford, N.W.10.

royds 790

EYES RIGHT



Let's see

ROYAL
EDISWAN
LAMPS

Advert. of The Edison Swan Electric Co. Ltd.
155 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2. L. 33

BOTTLED VINEGAR is best!



SARSON'S
VIRGIN VINEGAR

*and this is the
BEST BOTTLED
VINEGAR*

RHEUMATISM

Rheumatism—however mild your symptoms—exact a merciless toll in pain and expense if not checked in time. Poisons and impurities in your system are usually the cause of rheumatic disorders. To get rid of these poisons, doctors recommend the drinking of mineral spa waters. But a visit to a spa involves time and expense that many people simply cannot afford these days.

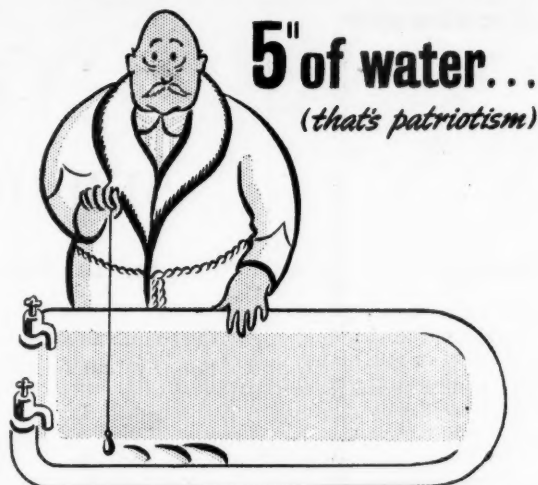
'Alkia' Saltrates may be described as a spa treatment in your own home. It contains the essential curative qualities of seven world-famous springs and has the same beneficial effect on the system at a fraction of the cost and without the inconvenience of travelling to an actual spa. A teaspoonful of 'Alkia' Saltrates in warm water before breakfast each morning soon relieves pain. Taken regularly, this pleasant, effervescent drink dissolves impurities in the blood-stream and greatly assists the kidneys to eliminate them from the system, thus helping to prevent recurring attacks of rheumatism.

A bottle of 'Alkia' Saltrates costs 3/9 (inc. tax). Get one from your chemist to-day and begin your spa treatment to-morrow morning.

MEGGEZONES

FOR COUGHS, COLDS, CATARRH

WHEN your throat feels like a furnace and the back of your nose is harsh and dry, that is the time you need MEGGEZONES. MEGGEZONES soothe the inflamed membranes, take away the soreness from your throat, and clear the stuffy breathing passages. The germicidal ingredients in MEGGEZONES destroy lurking microbes and prevent further infection. Diseases like Catarrh, epidemics like Flu, Common Cold all start in the nose and throat. Be on the safe side. Carry MEGGEZONES with you always. MEGGEZONES are made and guaranteed by MEGGESON CO. LTD., LONDON, S.E.16, makers of medicated pastilles and lozenges since the year 1796. MEGGEZONES are, for your protection, sold by qualified chemists only, 1/6d. including tax.



a tablet of WRIGHT'S

(that's practical)

Not so deep these days... not so hot either. Never mind—Wright's still "rules the waves." Even if it comes to bathing in a teacup that fine fragrant lather would put a man in form for the day. It's as stimulating as a sea breeze. And how germs do hate it!

WRIGHT'S Coal Tar Soap

7½^d per tablet (Tax included) One tablet — one coupon



Hi
Guinner!

WHY DON'T
YOU TRY
FITTING..

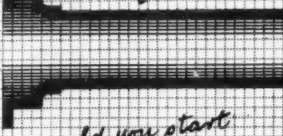
FERODO
BRAKE LININGS



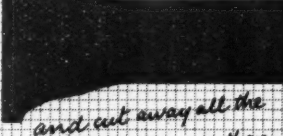
FERODO BRAKE LININGS MAKE MOTORING SAFE



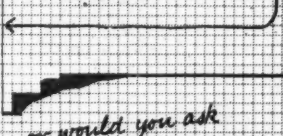
If you wanted a lot
of steel parts like
this? (in section)



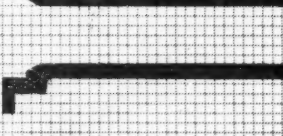
would you start
with a forging
like this?




and cut away all the
metal here — and then
bore from the
solid throughout



or would you ask
the *S.T.A.C. for
tubular forgings
like this?



A steel tube can be just a round piece of metal with a hole in it. Or it can be so forged, manipulated, upset and 'worked up' that it changes into a motor axle, an oxygen cylinder, a lighting standard, a hypodermic needle or a thousand and one other things to help industry save time, money and trouble.

Issued by Tube Investments Ltd. 
★ STEEL TUBES ADVISORY CENTRE
OLDBURY, BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND



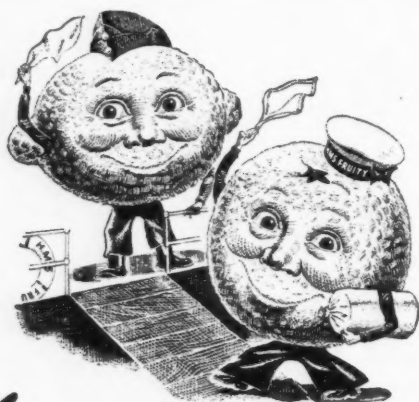
The Priceless Biscuit

It is an odd reflection that, if the 'points' be lacking, not all the wealth of Ophir will suffice to purchase a single Romary Biscuit. And in a topsy-turvy world, where the cost of excellence in the new currency of 'points' is no more than that of mediocrity, the best becomes more than ever desirable.

We, no less than you, regret that in some parts of the country wartime necessity makes it impossible for you to buy Romary Biscuits. To those more fortunately placed, we would say: Romary Biscuits are still the supreme example of the art of biscuit craftsmanship and today the need for 'points' lays an additional emphasis upon quality.

ROMARY'S 'Tunbridge Wells' Biscuits

(Registered Trade Mark)



Au revoir - BUT NOT GOODBYE

Now that fruit drinks and table waters bearing brand names are unobtainable, you will be unable, for a while, to enjoy IDRIS with

its refreshing wholesomeness and superb quality. But this war cannot last for ever. Till victory then is won—

DON'T FORGET

IDRIS



IDRIS LIMITED, LONDON, MAKERS OF QUALITY TABLE WATERS THROUGH FIVE SUCCESSIVE REIGNS

'Viyella' ^{Regd.}

SERVICE SHIRTS

for Service overland and overseas

Off to an unknown destination, by routes which may



take him half round the world, an officer with 'Viyella' Service Shirts in his kit is well prepared to face any extremes or

changes of climate. The smooth healthy texture, lasting colours and permanently easy fit of these shirts, in all circumstances and after any amount of hard wear and washing, are really something to write home about. In Navy, Army and Air Force regulation styles and colours from 18/11, collars 2/7½, 'Viyella' Service ties 3/3. Stocked by high class hosiers and outfitters everywhere.



Overseas Offices and Representatives throughout the world.

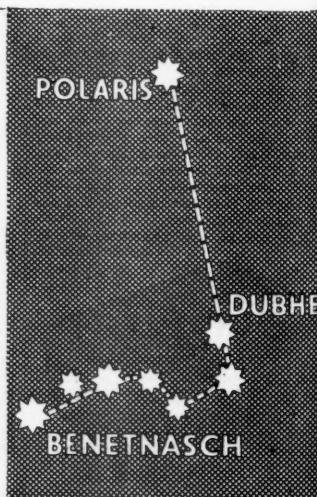
STAR LOCATION

This chart is reproduced by permission of the Air Ministry.

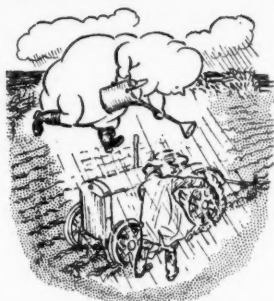
HOW TO FIND THE POLE STAR



The Pole Star (Polaris) is the "policeman" of the sky; you can rely on it for directions. To locate it, look first for the familiar plough, which forms part of the Great Bear, and then for the two stars which act as pointers. The Pole Star, which is due North, always helps you to find your way—and Bovril always helps you to keep warm!



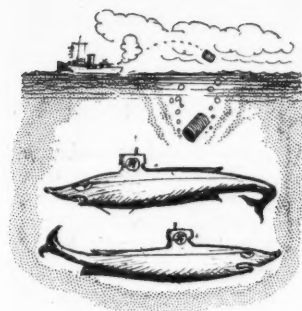
Thank your stars for
HOT BOVRIL



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCIV No. 5323

February 24 1943

Charivaria

A CORRESPONDENT says his wife should be a member of the Brains Trust. When he comes home late she has spontaneous questions to any answers.

o o

"Why do women so frequently come in late?" asks a harassed theatre manager. Is it not probably for appearance's sake?

o o

"In Hollywood the camera decides whether you're beautiful or not," states a writer. The answer's in the negative, so to speak.

o o

"My new maid never sweeps under the bed," complains a correspondent. Other maids sweep everything there.

o o

Time for Reflection

"At — Police Court a soldier was sent to prison for two months for stealing a mirror from a barber's shop."—*Local Paper*.

o o

A housewife says there is something missing about the war-time pancake. The answer's a lemon.

o o

Very few glow-worms, according to a naturalist, have been seen this year. A battery shortage there, too?

o o

"Highlander Gifted with Supernatural Powers," reads a heading. The un-canny Scot.

o o

It has been predicted that people will one day be born without ears. Then what will the little men rest their bowler hats on?

Amendment for Fascists

Still cheer *fortissimo*
For the Generalissimo.
But if you see Ciano,
Drop down to *piano*.

o o

A forger is said to have offered counterfeit £1 notes for 15s. each. Too dear. Real ones aren't worth that.

o o

"During our travels across the desert we came upon wandering tribesmen who spent hours amusing themselves by beating the ground with long clubs," writes an Eighth Army man. Yet further evidence of the increasing popularity of golf.

o o

"Quite a number of sailors can be seen with glasses nowadays," says a correspondent. The majority of them, however, prefer pint pots.

o o

A new type of banana is being grown in the West Indies, but there is no truth in the rumour that they are fitted with zip-fasteners.

o o

Things Which Might Have Been Differently Expressed

"Where a manufacturer sells a utility vehicle, his aim must be to ensure a minimum number of trouble-free miles."—*The Motor Cycle*.

o o

Broadcasters work long hours. But if an announcer telephones that he will be detained at the studio his wife can at least confirm it by listening to the midnight news.



Beyond the Border

IN the land I saw—but I only obtained a Pisgah view of it from a far mountain-top—there was an abundance of goods and services, but no metal coins nor Treasury notes were in use.

As one of the greatest poets among the citizens had put it (rather neatly as it seemed to me)

It flows with milk and honey
But we never need no money.

And these two lines were incorporated, together with various economic statistics of a less lyrical intensity, in the National Anthem.

What did they use instead? I don't know why anybody should ask that question. Coupons in that land were the sole claim upon commodities. There was of course nothing new in this. The system had been tried in several Utopias, and to some extent—I am not sure how far—in the Soviet Republics of Russia.

But in the country which I saw the system had been in many ways extended. Each citizen, for instance, carried a very large book for which a special pocket (like a "hare" pocket) had been made in his Utility suit, and since trousers only came down a short way below the knees there was no waste of cloth. (I need hardly say that both sexes were obliged to wear trousers.) The book began with a signed photograph of the citizen which had to be retaken every year, and it was otherwise filled with coupons lasting for the same period.

But no coupon was valid until it had been stamped and dated by an official of the Ministry of Goods and Evils, which employed in its Central Office, and its local branches and sub-branches, about two million hard-working men and women. There were coupons for everything except houses, travel, heat, light, water and medical attendance, which were free.

You find nothing revolutionary in this idea? Nor did I, reader. The rather surprising novelty in the economic policy of this land was that no more than half the coupons in the book were made available for material things. The other half were called "morality" coupons and carried exactly the same value as the rest; they were stamped by the Ministry in recognition of "noble behaviour," which had to be guaranteed by the signature of a Justice of the Peace or of a Minister of Religion, as happens now when you lose a lot of coupons and have to get a new supply of the lovely things. (And it is perhaps because this accident has just happened to me that I happen to be writing all this.) But in the far country of which I tell the evidence of eight proven neighbours as well as the signature of both these authorities was needed to obtain the stamp for a "morality" coupon, and there was naturally a great deal of competition to do deeds of courage and kindness, to exercise courtesy, tact, amiability, patriotism, thrift and goodwill. It was possible, in fact (for all men started equal), to become rather rich by being very good.

A great deal of the time and trouble of the officials of the new Ministry (and indeed they used a lot of trouble, and oh, such a lot of time) was taken up in assessing the honesty and validity of these "conduct" coupons for every citizen every month, and there was naturally an Appeal Tribunal for those who thought their assessment was a little too low. But the general effect was excellent. The nation became a nation of what we should call "Billy Browns," and endured incredible sacrifices, especially in

buses and trains, in order to obtain signatures for their stamps.

But there were exceptions. At the other end of the scale (for we must for truth's sake glance at the more sordid side of the country's affairs) the "morality" coupons of those who committed any crime or offence were cancelled by the various Courts of Justice, and this was indeed almost the hardest penalty that sinners were obliged to endure. Only one crime was punishable by death, and this was the act of pronouncing coupons as though it were spelled kewponns. The Board of Education insisted upon that, and many citizens had to go to the scaffold before the necessary degree of culture was attained. It was also compulsory for every citizen who addressed a stranger to say "sir" or "madam," but never "comrade" or "mate," and never to omit this mark of politeness even when apologising for having a toe crushed or a hat knocked into the mud.

Those who forfeited all their "morality" coupons (or failed to acquire any) were reduced to a bare subsistence level and were unable to renew their outfit of prosperity china, security clothes, approved books, controlled cosmetics, and dehydrated alcohol until they became good again.

It will be seen at once that this was a great incentive to give away everything that one did not really want to somebody who did really want it in order to acquire a testimonial of virtue, but this was found to be a benefit to the community, since it encouraged enlightened self-interest at the expense of mere stupid greed.

Children most rightly began to be eligible for these new coupons at a very early age (and there was even a "points" system for neatness, punctuality, not telling lies, and eating large crusts of durability bread), for only by possession of a great number of coupons could a boy or girl obtain an appointment under the Ministry of Goods and Evils, which was considered for some reason or other the best kind of bureaucratic post in the land. It was possible also to lay up a large stock of coupons for one's old age. The position of artists or those possessing the artistic temperament was difficult, for such people are not always the best citizens. But there was happily a special tribunal to weigh artistic merit against gluttony, irritability, conceit, improvidence, carelessness, and all those minor foibles to which artists, unlike other men and women, are prone, and to limit the cancellation of their coupons to a reasonable degree.

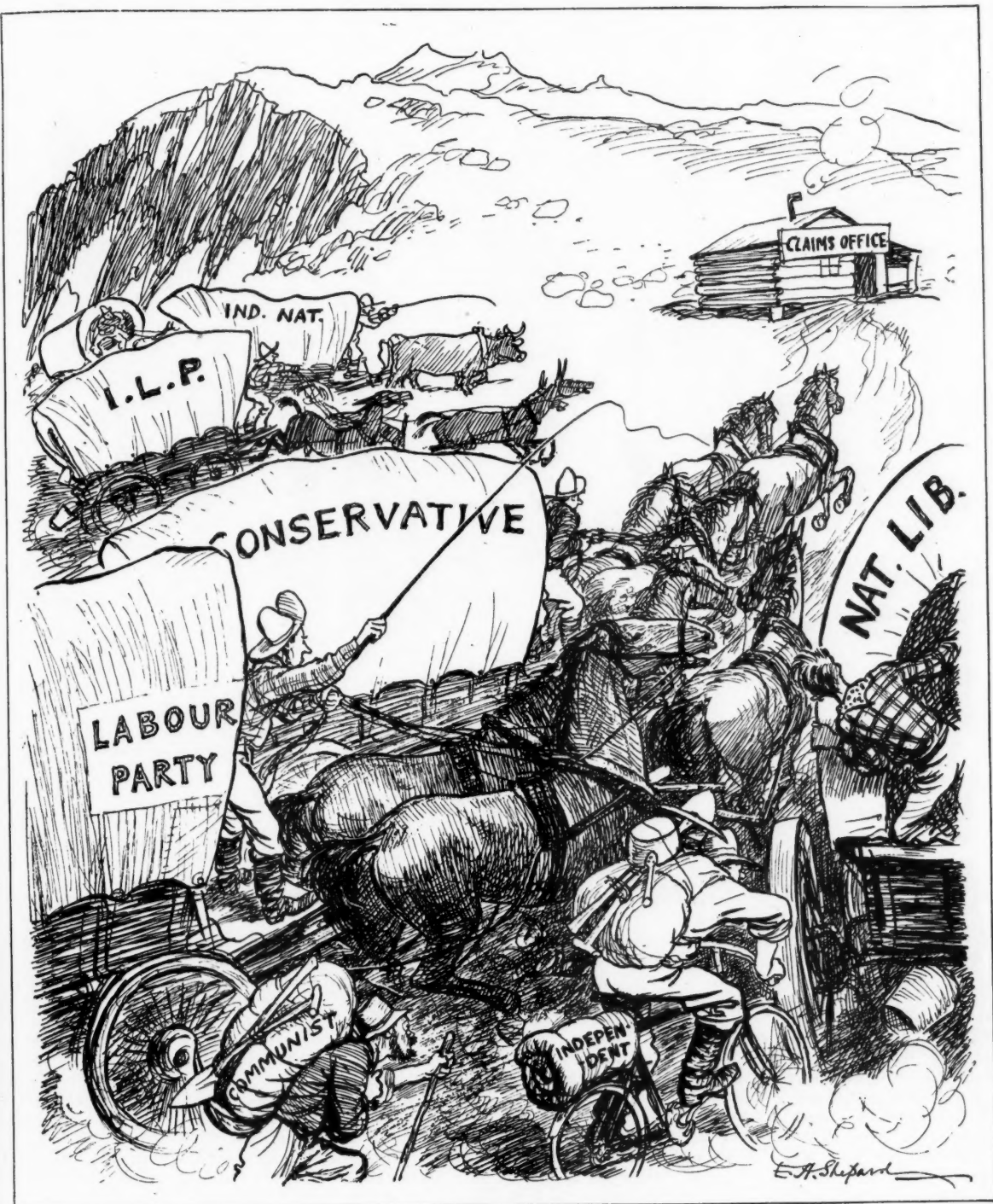
I only caught a glimpse, as I said, of this happy country with its desirability houses and mitigated pleasure-grounds, its subsidized entertainments and aerodromes, its art galleries and restaurants, its farms and factories and its Government offices so numerous that they almost formed industrial cities of their own. I stayed outside. And the reason for this was simple. Not all persons who desired to live in so beautiful and so enlightened a land were permitted to enter it. There was a preliminary State examination. And I failed. But I was treated very mercifully. I was presented with an emigration kewponn for Patagonia.

Perhaps it was just as well.

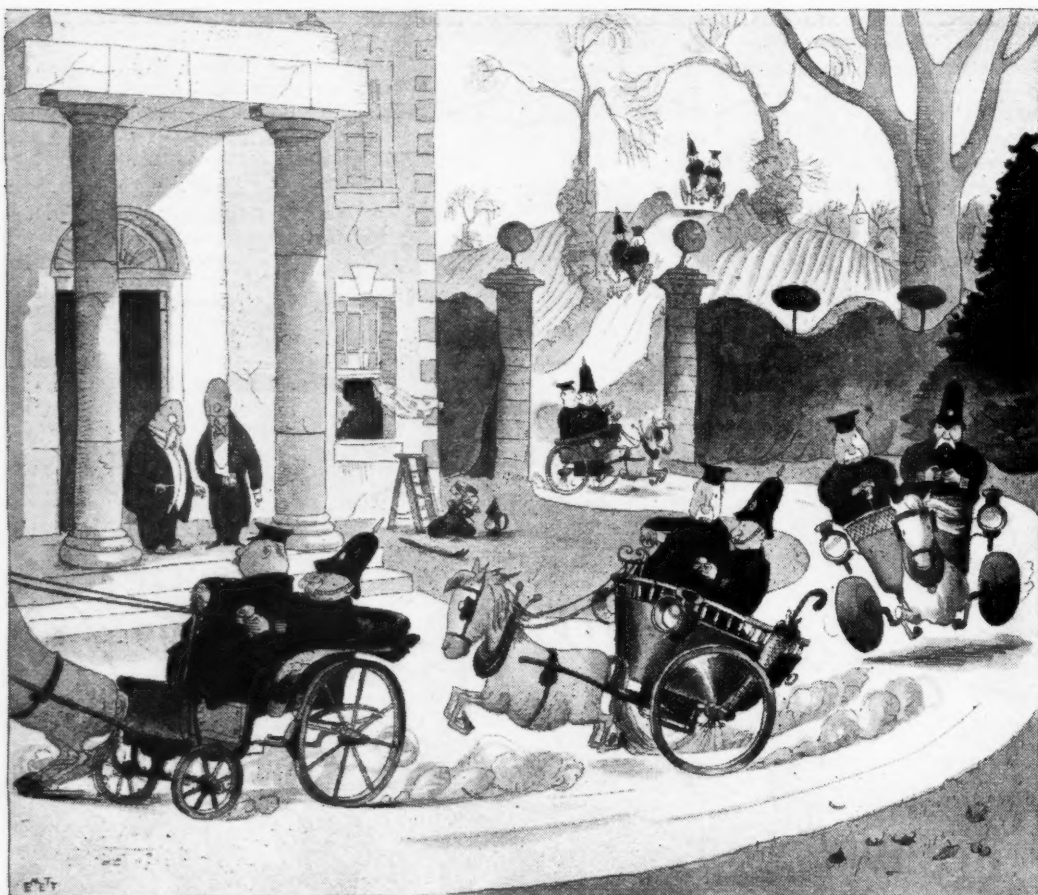
EVOE.

Ventre à Terre

"He said he was 52, but he looked years older. Tall and gaunt, with a violent twitch of the right eye and his stomach protruding below his field-grey overcoat, which nearly swept the ground, Von Paulus looked morose."—*Scottish Paper*.



CHAOS AT KLONDYKE
A JAM IN THE BEVERIDGE RUSH



"The Flying Squad, your Grace."

Letters to a Conscript Father

MY DEAR FATHER,—You see before you (or you would if you were here) an N.C.O. who has narrowly avoided losing his tapes before they'd even got the shine off; a son of yours who has come near dragging the Service name of the Padgates through the foulest mire. . . .

I can be funny about it now, and that's a blessing, but it was no joke at the time, I can tell you. The panic began when Bairstow and I saw from D.R.O.s that we were both detailed for Station Commander's Parade last Saturday. Just our luck. I think I told you we both had vertical wind-up about merely binding a handful of airmen on an ordinary morning's square-bashing—but Station Commander's Parade! That's a thing that

even Squadron Leaders have evil dreams about, waking up crying like children because they can't remember the difference between Column of Threes and Column of Route. It gets everybody groggy—everybody, that is, but the Station Commander. He can make the rules up as he goes along, of course, so it just doesn't leave him any margin of error.

Bairstow and I were detailed as Right Guide and Right Marker respectively for No. 11 Squadron, and naturally the first thing to do was to find out what our jobs consisted of. Dad, you must please forget all I told you about how to dodge going on the Square. After all, that was before I was an N.C.O., and I think, if you haven't done so, you'd better destroy

all those earlier letters of mine. Suppose something happened to you, and the authorities found them in your kit! But, even for your own good, and in case nothing does happen to you, forget all I told you about parade-scrounging; otherwise you'll find yourself one day in the position we found ourselves last Saturday—absolutely ignorant of what goes on at ceremonial parades.

Bairstow asked a lot of people what a Right Guide had to do, and I made heaps of inquiries about Right Markers, but none of the N.C.O.s would help. They just said it would be all right and we mustn't worry. Some consolation! But I suppose they can't be blamed, really. After all, half the fun in being an experienced N.C.O. is in laughing

like mad at the mistakes of inexperienced ones. So we just had to turn up at 0715 hours on Saturday morning looking as smart and knowledgeable as we could. This wasn't easy, because neither of us had had what you could call a good night's rest.

Trouble started at once. The Detail had said that No. 11 Squadron would fall in between Blocks 1 and 2 on the edge of the East Side of the Parade Ground. When we got there we found a squadron formed up and a Flight-sergeant smoking a cigarette in the shelter of the Block entrance. Bairstow went up and said smartly, "I'm your Right Guide, Flight-Sergeant!" and the Flight said, "Not mine. I've got one," and pointed to a Corporal at the end of the Squadron's front rank. It turned out that he had a Right Marker, too. Bairstow said, "But this is No. 11 Squadron, isn't it?" and the Flight said, "Falling-in allocation's been altered. This is No. 9." I asked him, most politely, where No. 11 was likely to be, and he just laughed and said that we'd better hurry, as time was getting on.

It was, too, so we began running from block to block making inquiries, until W.O. Bewstead called out, "What do you think you're up to, those two Corporals, tearing about the camp during Colour-hoisting?" It was only then we noticed what a hush there was about the place. So we stood to attention until Colour-hoisting was over and then started to run faster than ever.

Eventually, just as "Markers" was sounded, we found No. 11 Squadron, formed up between Blocks 7 and 8 on the West Side. Bairstow ran up to the Sergeant-in-charge and panted out, "Number eleven?" and the Sergeant said, "It all depends"—then bawled the squadron to attention with a voice that nearly knocked my hat off. "But is it?" I said, and he explained that it *had* been No. 11, but it was No. 12 now, on account of another Training Squadron having been detailed at the last minute. Finally he decided we'd better parade with him, although he said we should probably be charged afterwards—for parading with No. 12 Squadron when we were detailed for No. 11.

Just as we were beginning to feel that things were coming right there was a tremendous shouting from the middle of the Parade Ground. It was W.O. Bewstead, standing in front of a line of Markers and yelling, "Double up there, Number Twelve Squadron Marker!" All the squadrons were standing silent round the Square,

waiting to march on. Nobody stirred. Then I suddenly went cold all over. Suppose it meant me! I turned to ask the Sergeant if he thought it did, but by this time Bairstow had got him on drawing a sketch-plan on No. 7 Block door, showing what a Right Guide had to do, and I couldn't attract his attention. Just like Bairstow, absolutely self-centred. After a few seconds W.O. Bewstead bawled out again for No. 12 Marker, and I decided to chance it. I set off across the Square at about six miles an hour. I felt like a fly on a wall.

When I got there W.O. Bewstead hadn't time to do more than tell me I was late, but he gave me a very nasty look with it, and I could see he was making a mental note. "What Squadron?" he yelped. "Eleven, sir!" I said, having taken care to memorize this ever since I first read the Detail. "Don't be a fool, Corporal," said the W.O.—"I've got an eleven. You're twelve." Then, of course, I lost my head and said that I had been detailed for twelve, but I was eleven now (meaning the other way round). "Don't you dare argue with me!" said the W.O. "Markers! From the right—Number!" Well, when the man next to me yelled out "Eleven," I resigned myself and yelled out "Twelve."

What would you have done?

But my troubles hadn't started yet. About three-quarters of an hour later, just as the Station Commander was beginning his inspection, the whole parade of about fifteen hundred men standing as still as wooden Indians, there was a sort of scuffle in front of our squadron and our sergeant passed out in a heap. This is apt to happen, you know, especially when a man has had to decide at the last minute between buttons and breakfast, and has plumped for buttons. Well, I must congratulate Bairstow on his presence of mind. He was the very first to rush and pick up the sergeant, and the corporal who was Left Guide at the other end went and helped him. So, of course the cunning blighters dragged the remains to the edge of the Square and got out of the rest of the Parade.

Now, the Flight-sergeant in charge of No. 13 Squadron, having seen all this, came up to me from behind and said in my ear, "Take over the squadron, Corporal." "What!" I said, shaking like a leaf. "Take over the Squadron!" "But—me?" "Yes, you. Who else is there?"

But, you know, it's wonderful what reserves you can summon up when you're faced with real danger. I don't suppose, as I stalked out in front of

that squadron, that there was one man who guessed what a panic I was in.

Well, I got through it all successfully—almost. I "Open Ordered," "Close Ordered," "Right Dressed," "Eyes Fronted"—managed the whole business like an old hand; until it came to the March Past. I watched all the other squadrons—their N.C.O. marching in front and giving the "Eyes Right" to the Station Commander in a terrific voice. I got my own Number twelve going, and in step. Then, as we were approaching the Saluting Base I suddenly realized that I couldn't remember for the life of me what foot to give the "Eyes Right" on. I was just in time to watch the previous squadron, though, and I saw that their N.C.O. gave it on the left foot. "Left, left," I said to myself, "on the left foot, on the left foot." And that's what did it, because I got that impressed on my mind so firmly that when the crucial moment arrived I gave the squadron "Eyes Left"—and they all strutted past the Big Cheese showing him the backs of their necks and gazing firmly at the Cookhouse. All except me. I disobeyed my own order automatically, and was able to see his face quite clearly. . . .

How did I escape court-martial? Well, they looked up the Detail to see who the corporal was who had had to take over No. 12 Squadron, and it turned out to be an inoffensive little thing called Fish. He was charged on Tuesday. Poor Fish.

No time for more,

Your loving Son PETER.

o o

Lovelier than Laughter

THEY are more beautiful than any dreams:

More joyfully than any lambs they leap—

The thoughts that come to us, as quiet comes,

Between waking and sleep.

They are more lovely than laughter, brighter far

Than morning is when its dawn-dappled sky

Holds both the crocus sun and the last star:

More tenuous than a sigh.

When sleep is longwhiles wooed and almost won—

Guarded, heart-hoarded, hope's guerdon has release,

And thought hovers (like a lark in the sun)

The well-loved ways of peace.

M. E. R.

More Collected Essays of J. Pope Clugston

THE NORMAL PARENT

A CHILD must always remember that his parents are only human. Above all, he must not thwart them, lest the most frightful complexes and inhibitions set in. Let them express themselves, dammit.

SAVING FOOD

In a magazine which reached me from the U.S.A., where many foods are now rationed, there was an interesting article on how to make food go farther. The writer was chiefly interested in saving bread. Stale bread must never be thrown away, he said. One good thing to do with it is to fry a slice of it in butter and lemon juice, pour a pint of honey over it (the American pint is only four-fifths the size of ours), and bake it. This keeps the bread from getting thrown out. But of course, though he fails to point it out, it also keeps the butter and lemons and honey from getting hurled away too. Unless you find you can't eat the darned thing after all. Butter is rationed in the U.S.A. and since sugar-rationing came in honey has been almost unobtainable, but bread is not rationed, so this recipe should have a wonderful effect in making people take care of their bread and avoid the shortage that would certainly lead to rationing sooner or later.

LEADER WRITING

The main technical dodge in leader-writing is the *cæsura*, the break in the middle which marks the point where you begin to contradict yourself.

JOKES

It does not pay to joke with:

- (a) chaps senior to you
- (b) chaps junior to you
- (c) magistrates and judges
- (d) psychologists.

Especially psychologists. But the funny thing is, it does no harm to laugh at the jokes of any of these chaps.

THE TELEPHONE

Every time you sit back and say that the radio is really a very wonderful thing after all, I do beg you to think of the telephone as well. We long ago accepted its wonders as commonplace, yet it should be a constant source of surprise to us. Only yesterday I was given *two* wrong numbers simultaneously, which is really rather marvellous when you come to think of it. Each

of these two chaps accused the other of having started the call and, of course, I simply sat spellbound and let them fight it out. They were still at it, hammer and tongs, when I softly rang off. Another thing about the telephone is that when you pay your bill the envelope requires no stamp. If all bills were like this we'd have the makings of a very decent little Better World right there.

THE BETTER WORLD

And speaking of the Better World, I was eavesdropping on another couple of chaps yesterday, apart from the double wrong number, and the first chap said one man's Better World is another man's poison. The second said "Yes, but you mustn't be greedy," and the first said "Who is being greedy?" and the second said "After all, it is the greatest good for the greatest number that matters," and the first said "A little unselfishness on the part of the greatest number would go a lot farther than a great deal of unselfishness on the part of a mere handful, surely, and anyhow, what do you mean by calling yourself the greatest number?" Well, this went on for some time and I didn't like to intervene, but I did want to point out to the first chap that a Better World is a change, at any rate, and a change is as good as a rest.

THE ARTS

Painters are always talking about rhythm and musicians about colour and so on until the two arts are apt to get very confused indeed. You even get painters painting to music, and there was once a man who invented a piano which squirted "colour chords" through a lantern on to a big screen. But there is a big difference between music and painting, all the same, and that difference is simply this: painting makes far, far less noise. Mind you, I have no sympathy for the man who doesn't like music and yet keeps bumping into concerts and amateur performances at every turn. As Shakespeare says, the man who has no stratagem in his soul is fit for music.

GERMAN INGENUITY

One hears a great deal about German inventiveness and ingenuity, but one can't help feeling that if only they had left their ingenuity where it was and not gone mucking about with it they wouldn't have needed it so badly at the present moment.

DOGS OF WAR

The U.S. Army is using more and more dogs, hundreds of thousands of them. The question that troubles me is this: if one of their dachshunds is caught by the enemy, is he shot as a spy?

UNIFORM

And speaking of uniform, surely the whole idea of having uniforms is that they are, so to speak, uniform. Obviously. And yet one hears that officers in practically all the Services go to bed in pyjamas of any hue that seems good to them. This mockery is a contradiction of the very word *uniform* and will go far to undermine discipline and morale.

ELEPHANTS

Elephants never forget an injury. This is supposed to be very wonderful. Actually it is merely unkind, not to say spiteful, vindictive, and malicious. A hyena would merely laugh it off and forget about it. And anyway, how much more wonderful it is to *invent* an injury, the way the rattlesnakes do, instead of simply remembering one like a mere parrot.

Times Aren't What They Were.

ONCE upon quite a time there was a Mrs. Clampacre with a son called Jack. Her motto was *Originality is All*, so she couldn't call him Julian, Christopher or Giles—and the other names that occurred to her, such as Peter and Patrick, would have been a bit out of date. Mr. Clampacre, the father of Jack, had passed out of her life years earlier and so had Jack's first two step-fathers. But Mr. Clampacre was still, rather precariously, on the *tapis* of their new flat, which was within a stone's-throw of Portman Square, W.1. Not that the taxi-drivers to whom Mrs. Clampacre gave this direction ever seemed to have a stone handy, and the result was that they often drove round and round Portman Square and its adjacent streets for quite a while before it occurred to them to try the Mews.

At the time of one of those Christmases that the war was to have ended before, as people say colloquially, Mr. Clampacre and the *tapis* parted

company, as he said he would actually prefer munition-making—though having the decency to leave it at that and not say to *what* he would prefer it.

Mrs. Clampacre immediately took a new flat for herself and Jack and the Pekinese dog, and said that she thought Maida Vale was better air for the child, otherwise she just couldn't have left the West End. The difficulty about taxis was eliminated, because now there practically weren't any and those there were just drove to and from the Dorchester Hotel.

With Mr. Clampacre away at the capstan, Mrs. Clampacre had a good deal of freedom and she felt it would be playing Hitler's game for him to let the war interfere with it, so instead she played her own games—which were bridge and dancing—and got in a P.G. who, in return for a bed in the box-room and part-use of the electric iron every other Saturday, gave up her rations, paid two and a half guineas weekly, and helped with housework. *Whom* it was that she helped the P.G.—who wasn't a very on-the-spot type—never found out from start to finish.

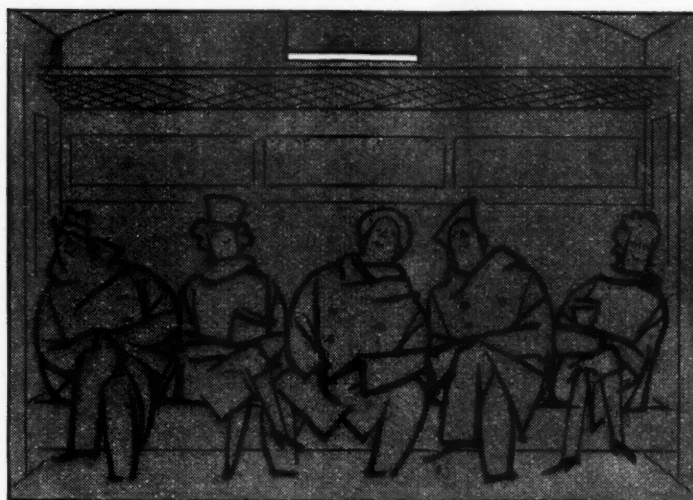
However, she had a maternity-complex—as Mrs. Clampacre often shudderingly remarked—and she was completely cuckoo about Jack, and Jack in return became absolutely crackers about her. So on she stayed.

Well, Christmas came—once a year as it always does. And Mrs. Clampacre said this war was getting beyond a joke, and no crystallized fruits was the limit, but a friend of hers knew where one could still get some decent drink and was taking her there.

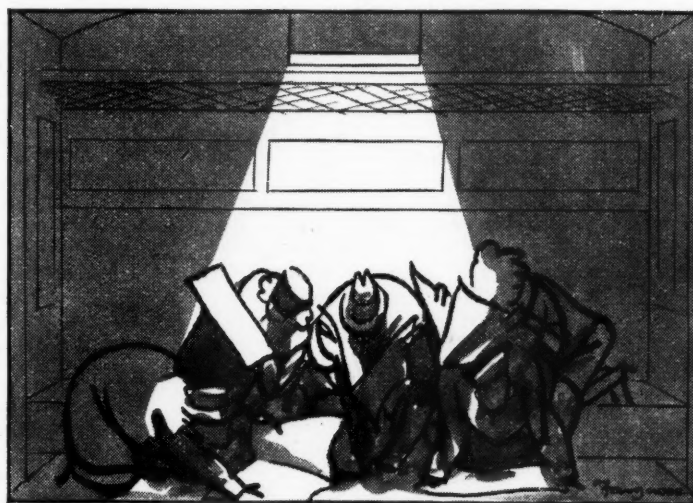
The P.G. said, without much subtlety, that there was Jack, to which Mrs. Clampacre naturally answered "So what?" and walked out of the flat, leaving Jack and the P.G. to the children's festival.

"What a one!" said the P.G., and she went to her own apartment, *née* box-room, and got her sweets-ration-card, and then, on a still better impulse, took Mrs. Clampacre's sweets-ration-card from behind the gramophone record of "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas," and then took her place in an enormous queue that stretched from the placard over the grocer's shop—*What Can I Do Without?*—to the placard over the confectioner's door: *How Can I Spend Less?*

Subsequently the P.G. and Jack passed a very agreeable afternoon over the gas-cooker, while the wireless gave them a talk all about their fuel-target, and also a swing version of Anitra's Dance on the cinema-organ, and a programme of Fun for the Forces that the P.G. told Jack he wouldn't understand till he was older.



Certainly the extra train-lighting has made a very great difference to—



our comfort.

And then Jack sat down in the corner of the living-room that wasn't cluttered up with the dog-basket, Mrs. Clampacre's unanswered letters, her second-best coat, her pyjamas, or the photographs of her friends in their uniforms, and the P.G. gave him the Christmas pie they'd just finished making.

"Is it a Wooltonian pie?" he asked.

"Yes, dear," said the P.G. firmly.

"Eat it all up like a good boy."

Jack, who was very young, ate it all up and thought what a good boy he

was, and every time he found a plum he uttered this thought aloud. And the P.G.—who had thrown Lord Woolton to the winds in making the pie—encouraged his misconception.

Moreover, one bad deed leading to another as is so often the case, she decided to take Jack and the Pekinese away with her to spend Christmas in the country at her brother's house. And when a placard at the station inquired of her *Is Your Journey Really Necessary?* she unhesitatingly replied that it was.

E. M. D.



"Actually, the Russians driving on Rostov are on just now. By the time you get your ticket there'll be the Japs in Rabaul, and by the time you sit down there'll be Donald Duck."

The Phoney Phleet

VIII.—H.M.S. "Litmus"

TALKING of Nelson, did you know
Lieutenant Percy Indigo,
A gallant sailorman and true,
Born, so to speak, in navy-blue
(The family boasted eight or nine
Chief Stewards in the direct line,
While, on the distaff side, the Phennes
For generations had been Wrens)?

The question is rhetorical
Because in either case I shall
Tell you the story of the fight
His trawler *Litmus* had one night—
Was it off Norway?—with a Hun
Whose ship, by far the larger one,
Thought she had Percy's packet cold.
Percy was nothing if not bold,
And when affairs looked really bad
A brilliant notion seized the lad.
He made his crew abandon ship
And, trusting to the dark to slip

Away unnoticed, meant to row
A matter of a mile or so
Then *board* the unsuspecting Fritz,
Whose ponderous Teutonic wits
Would not imagine any fools
Acting so clean against the rules.

There was, however, one small flaw
In Percy's scheme—the Germans *saw*:
At least, they saw him pull away.
With cries of "*Hoch!*" (German hooray)
They very typically thought
That he had scuttled (German sport),
So, launching every single boat
To reach his ship while still afloat,
They pulled the other way like mad.
Friend Percy naturally had
Seen nothing of all this: so when
Encouraging his worthy men
With cries of "Every Man This Day
Will do Precisely as I Say!"
He clambered up the Jerry's side
The vessel was unoccupied.

This seemed unusual, but soon
The sun—dash! I forgot—the moon
Emerged and Percy saw at once
How matters stood. He was no dunce;
Possession—he recalled the saw—
Was 0-9 of any law;
The ships and crews had done a swop,
He'd won the deal, and there he'd stop.
In any case, what could he do?
Go back? Eject the German crew
From *Litmus*? They were twice his strength,
And, if he tried that on, at length
They'd push his party in the drink
And then he'd lose both ships.

I think
The chap was right, but do you know
When he got back to Scapa Flow
He went before some stupid Court
Who had the neck to say he ought
To have brought home his proper ship.

Their point was if one starts a trip
With any given naval craft
It's worse than criminal, it's daft
To come home with a different one.
That sort of thing was—well, not done.

Our Percy made a strong appeal,
Remarking that he'd won the deal
By several hundred tons. And then
To capture his own ship again
Meant friction with the Huns—he might
Even have *sunk* her in the fight.
And so the argument went on.

At last some sportsman hit upon
A bright idea. He said the *name*
Was vital; if it were the same
As that with which one started out
What had Whitehall to moan about?
Let them rename the German ship
The *Litmus*, then it was a snip,
And who would worry, save the Hun?
The Court adjourned, and it was done.

H. J. Talking

ONE day my wife asked me whether I had ever noticed the picturesque irregularity of her teeth, it being her habit to draw my attention to her charms. I had, as it happened, noticed that several in front had been knocked out or extracted and that she had omitted to replace them. When the subject came up I asked, therefore, why she did not buy some of the imitation teeth you hear of people having, and she at once burst into tears, saying that all her money was tied up and that if I had not appreciated the present arrangement I could have bought the teeth myself, though any attempt to do so she would have taken as an insult and hint that she might be improved. I soothed her over by asking how she had lost them and she told me that it was a dentist who had been in love with her and kept removing them as souvenirs which he kept on a silver salver by his bed.

This money to which she referred had been tied up years before by a solicitor, who had then retired and refused to return and release it, it being so cunningly tied that nobody else could do anything. Several had had a shot but only one made any impression at all and he merely doubled it, leaving it as inaccessible as before but twice as tantalizing. This solicitor on retirement became an amateur geometrician and caused much pain and confusion to the profession by detecting flaws in the usual proof of theorem one, this having a weakening effect on the science as a whole. He was offered large fees to draft a watertight proof which would leave things much as they were, but said that it would be contrary to etiquette, without explaining why.

One of the most satisfying retirements I know is that of a schoolmaster who wanders about until he sees a group of small boys at a street corner, and then he pushes them into the gutter saying, "D— you and your parents," and similar rude and uninhibited things. When headmasters write to the newspapers he replies making hearty fun of their grammar and logic, this puzzling them in the extreme. He once attended an educational conference at Weston-super-Mare and let off stink-bombs and imitated animals until they had to call the police, sarcasm merely making him sob loudly and scrape his chair along the floor.

I am not a man to hide my weaknesses and one of these is that I do not run effortlessly across the Great. Some people meet them wherever they happen to be, and when met they at once introduce them to famous friends. If you study books of reminiscences you will notice how simple it is. For example, having met Bernard Shaw on a bus he will at once introduce you to H. G. Wells and after that it is all plain sailing. Unfortunately, in my case, I never seem to be able to take the first step. To improve the level of my acquaintance I once founded a club with some money I had made by an invention, this being pleasantly-flavoured shaving-soap, the taste of the ordinary kind lasting well into breakfast. I hired several rooms in the West End and established a club that I called The Senior Athenæum, and then wrote to many celebrities saying that they had been elected honorary members. The first day we opened I pervaded the place, borrowing matches, grunting remarks about the weather and making complaints about the secretary, to show that I was quite at home in this kind of world; but only four celebrities came, and they kept themselves to themselves at one end of the bar, and said that being honorary extended to drinks. In the course of a week or two a number of others drifted in and then they held a meeting and redrafted the rules of the club so that nobody

who wasn't in *Who's Who* could be a member at all, this excluding me but no one else.

After a good many rebuffs of this kind I began to notice an inferiority complex, the signs and symptoms being a loud grating laugh, a hectoring manner and forcing my door open with a knife instead of using a key. My condition was complicated by the simultaneous appearance of a superiority complex, manifested by a deprecating cough, a tendency to refuse second helpings and the hallucination that all our furniture had been bought second-hand. I consulted a psychologist who asked me when I felt my best. I said when my wife was ill and I had to look after her, so he sent her to a surgeon to have her appendix removed and I was at least temporarily cured.

On the whole my inability to contact celebrities has not caused me so much trouble as my shape blindness. To be colour-blind is something that might happen to anyone, like being left-handed, but to be shape-blind is annoying and so rare that few will make allowances for it. Fortunately it is only occasional, but when I get an attack of it I see square things round and round things square. I have tried medicine and I have tried beautiful thoughts, which were sent post-free by a health-thinker in Maida Vale, and I have even tried having my teeth X-rayed, this being a last resort among doctors, but nothing does me any good except to be surrounded entirely by vague outlines, this being achieved by filling our home with artificial fog.

The children have been fortunately free from disease, though Junissimus, while at his prep. school, suffered from something our physician's locum said was senile decay, he having the symptoms down in his lecture notes; but luckily he found in time that he had got the pages mixed and it was really whooping cough. This locum was called Bluff Basil Boot and he had been a leading hammer-thrower for his hospital. He was so good at it that they overlooked a good deal and he never had much practice except when his hammer hit people, he being hot tempered and getting a good deal of this rather specialized experience.



"Fuel-saving devices, Madam? Top floor."



"Wal, Lootenant, it sure has been swell having you here."

The Winds and the Flags

IN soft grey Irish skies,
When leaves fell from the beech,
I saw four winds arise.
And thus I spoke to each:

O wild and wailing guest,
What wonders hast thou seen
Travelling from the West?
"A nation roused. 'Between

Two oceans, where I went,
Furnaces flashed at me,
Across a continent,
That men may yet be free."

Thou from the North, what word?
"I tell of ice and hail,

And patient hope unheard;
Which three shall yet prevail."

Thou of the South? "The dust
Where ancient emblems lie,
And, crumbling as all must,
The latest tyranny."

O Eastern wind, what then?
"Snow, snow, all night and day,
And under it the men
That went Napoleon's way.

I lift the streaming flags
Of Liberty." "And I
Saw them on Norway's crags,
Although in secret, fly,"

The North wind said. And he
Who travelled from the South
Called, "They are flying free
Down Nile from source to
mouth.

"And through the West," he
roared
Who lifts the Atlantic surge,
"Without our aid have soared
Those flags by their own urge."

Those flags, that like dead leaves
Droop in the Irish air
Fallen where no one grieves
And men no longer care.

ANON.



"ACCORDING TO PLAN"

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, February 16th.—House of Commons: Beveridge Report.

Wednesday, February 17th.—House of Commons: More Explosions.

Thursday, February 18th.—House of Commons: A Muffled Noise.

Tuesday, February 16th.—Alice never never quite lost her wonderment about Wonderland. Your scribe, after twenty years amid the highly-specialized atmosphere of Parliament, has not lost any of his wonderment over the ways and whims of that venerable institution.

Take to-day's proceedings. There we were, all ready for a nice friendly chat over the Beveridge Report, with Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD moving a motion that not even the most finicky and pernickety of Government Chief Whips could object to, and everything going as merrily as an invasion bell—when, suddenly, hey presto! the whole place went up in smoke and hard crool words.

It was not as if anybody had sprung a surprise on anybody. Sir JAMES GRIGG, the War Minister, who has an almost Oriental gift for pithy truths, clearly warned the House (admittedly in another connection) that "if we had



LEFT-WING THREE-QUARTERS?

MR. QUINTIN HOGG (Cons.)

to remove all the anomalies in this world it would take a very long time." And yet . . . But perhaps it would be better to begin at the beginning.

Well, there we were, all ready for the aforementioned friendly chat. Mr. GREENWOOD, who is full of knowledge

of the wiles of Government Whips, had tabled a motion that was so indefinite that it was acceptable to the Government. It merely said (in a number of words) that the Beveridge Report was a good idea, worth looking at some time.

To this, seven amendments, all in much more precise terms (and correspondingly unacceptable to the Government) had been put down. One wanted the Report, the whole Report, and nothing but the Report—and quickly. Another wanted the Report put off until the Hitlerian Kalends, or later. Others wanted or did not want the Report.

The moment questions were over Lord WINTERTON was up with a request to Mr. Speaker to indicate which of the amendments he intended to call for debate. "Several of them," said he, with that gift for understatement that makes him so considerable a Parliamentarian, "are rather more definitive and objective than the original motion."

"Yes," said Mr. Speaker, "but I do not intend to call any of them."

So on went the debate. Mr. MAISKY, the Soviet Ambassador, leaned over to miss no word. Mr. SHINWELL, on the Opposition Front Bench, leaned even further over to miss no word either—although for a different reason, as will appear.

Mr. GREENWOOD was as definite as anybody but a Minister could wish in his demand for decisive and speedy action on the Report. Some unkind person or persons intervened with the query: "Why not say so in your motion?" but Mr. GREENWOOD noticed not the interruption.

Ignoring the Government order that hire-purchase is to cease for the duration, he asked that the Beveridge Plan should be given to a grateful nation "in instalments."

"Why instalments?" bawled the Back-Bench barrackers bellicosely.

"Because," explained their patient leader, momentarily forgetting the ancient rule about addressing the Chair and swinging round on them, "if we do not get it in instalments, we shall not get it at all!"

The objectors looked as if they had heard of people who did not keep up their instalments, but did not pursue the subject. Mr. GREENWOOD, as if reminded of such sordid things by this interlude, mentioned that "pounds, shillings and pence have become meaningless symbols."

Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, murmured something that sounded like "Oh, yeah?" and Conservative Members muttered things that sounded much more

definite. Mr. GREENWOOD described finance as the "handmaiden" of industry, and then as its "master," whereupon an irreverent supporter supposed audibly that finance must be a blinkin' harumfrodite.

Then the debate drifted into—well,



ANDERSONIUS SUPERBUS,
DECAPITATOR

a debate—until the time came for Sir JOHN ANDERSON, Lord President of the Council, to give the Government's views. Sir JOHN is a thorough person, and he had taken what appeared to be a verbatim note of Mr. GREENWOOD's speech. When he went to the table, he added about fifty foolscap sheets to his already considerable pile, coughed and began.

The Government intended to accept most of the provisions of the Beveridge Report, he said, and intended to make the plan work—"We really do!" This statement produced the usual crop of questions and, these over, Sir JOHN said the Report would be implemented when we could see our financial road more clearly—in other words, when the war was over and we had laid the foundations of restored trade and sure employment.

Which might be considered to be reasonable enough and equivalent to the well-tried (if not perhaps very modern or progressive) method of putting in one's foundations before erecting a house on them.

But not at all. The catechism became a caterwauling, and Sir JOHN (most courteous of men) had to appeal for "ordinary courtesy" from Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN, who seemed to be on the verge of hysteria, and several times emitted



G.K. Mead

"Dear Mother, I can't tell you where I am, but I am somewhere in England."

shrieks of laughter in the most unlikely places. Others joined in the shouts and counter-shouts, with Sir JOHN interjecting an occasional reproof or appeal, an even more occasional item of his speech.

It came to this: As much as we can as soon as we can—when and if we can afford it.

Mr. SHINWELL, Mr. BEVAN and their friends, throwing their (metaphorical) black cloaks around their conspiratorial shoulders and putting on (genuine) scowls, hurried off to the vaults, or wherever they meet. "I go—I come back!" they seemed to say. And that was the first day.

Wednesday, February 17th.—When the House rose last night there were on the Order Paper one motion and seven amendments, and a curious situation developed. Mr. GREENWOOD, who leads the Labour Party and is *ex-officio* Leader of the Opposition, kept his motion on the Paper but gave

his blessing to an amendment which expressed "dissatisfaction" with Sir JOHN ANDERSON's reply to the motion. On that, said the Lobbies, crisis might come, for the Beveridge Report is the touchstone of all the political future, and even the life of the Government might be in jeopardy.

So into the debate they all plunged again. It was not a very inspiring discussion, but everybody seemed deeply moved for or against the Report.

After a long time Sir KINGSLEY WOOD, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose fate it will (or, at least, may) be to find the gold for the new El Dorado, went to the Table to make another Government statement.

He might have contented himself with the time-honoured formula: "I have nothing to add to what my right honourable friend said yesterday." That would probably not have annoyed the House. But Sir KINGSLEY amended the formula to: "I have

plenty to subtract from what my right honourable friend said yesterday," and proceeded to do quite a bit of whittling down.

The House grew angrier and angrier. Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN (just possibly with the recollection that his wife, Miss JENNIE LEE, was at that moment fighting a critical by-election in Bristol) was more explosive than ever, with Mr. SHINWELL as a sort of slow (but not too slow) match in front of him. And that was the second day.

Thursday, February 18th.—Mr. HERBERT MORRISON, no mean orator at any time, made the speech of his life to-day. The situation certainly called for it. It was a tricky job, even for him.

But he did it. The Government got through by 335 votes to 119. Whether we hear more about it or not, the local action at any rate was successful.

And that was the third day. Quite a week!



"My son has just returned from underseas."

Little Talks

DID you read Lord Beaverbrook on the House of Lords?

No.

Highly interesting. I cut it out. Half a minute. No, that's not it. Here—no, that's 1941. Are you ever able to find bits you cut out of the papers?

No. *It's an anti-social act, anyhow. You should pass them on intact to the next fellow.*

If I thought the next fellow was interested in the same things, I should. But he seldom is. Anyhow, he doesn't read. Like most of us, nowadays, he chooses a catchword and goes on repeating it. And anyone who doesn't use the same catchword is wrong.

Well, what did Beaverbrook say?

He said something like this: "Here's a new constitutional position. The House of Lords, with nobody noticing

it, has become more powerful than it ever was."

That's what you were saying the other day.

No. I said they were more important—because they were better. I hadn't thought of his point. "Here's the House of Commons," he said, "elected in"—when was it?

1935. *I remember because the twins were born.*

I don't follow the reasoning. However, "Here's the House of Commons sending us every year, now, a Bill for the Prolongation of the Life of Parliament. And so far we've graciously consented to pass it." It doesn't

matter to the Lords, of course, because they go on for ever.

Or think they do.

Well, anyhow, they will look just the same after the next Election. And the House of Commons may look very different.

You bet it will! My hat, it will!

Now then, less waspish! This is a purely non-controversial controversy. Anyhow, don't be too sure.

I'm sure of one thing. It's high time we had a new House of Commons.

You may be right. It's high time I had a new suit. But I can't—till after the war. You may want a General Election. It's difficult—till after the war (though it may happen). The King might want a General Election—but not even he could suddenly say: "I dissolve this Parliament."

Unless advised by the Prime Minister?

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

No. Unless I err most grievously.

Couldn't he refuse the Royal Assent to the Prolongation of the Life of Parliament Bill?

Not the done thing. Hasn't been done for ages.

A pity.

Hullo! What's this? Are you in favour of absolute powers for the Monarchy?

Not really, of course—no.

Only now and then, in special emergencies?

Yes. No. Well, I mean—

Don't be afraid, old boy.

I was thinking—it's not likely to happen, I know—but suppose, after the passing of the Prolongation of Life Act, the House of Commons voted itself double salaries and free beer?

You think it would be constitutional for the King to dissolve Parliament on his own?

I don't know about "constitutional"—I'm sure it would be popular.

Fortunately we shan't have to decide the question. Nor will the King. You see, as Beaverbrook points out, the House of Lords now have all the necessary powers. The House of Lords, for good reason or bad, have only to refuse to pass the Prolongation of Life Bill and Parliament in due course is automatically dissolved. They are the only people, apart from the Prime Minister, who, having decided they want a General Election just now, could have it—and, by the way, I'm not absolutely sure about the Prime Minister. In other words, the House of Lords hold the life of the House of Commons in their hands.

But this is frightful!

Why? I thought you thought the House of Commons was—

Yes, but I don't like the Lords having all that power.

Well, it won't last long. And, I must say, I find it slightly amusing and just, the poor despised peers who, everybody thought, had practically no more place in the Constitution, popping up into their own again—not only respected but powerful—able to dismiss the lordly Commons for the merest whim. How Gilbert would have loved it!

These wretched humorists are all alike.

Certainly. They have a quicker perception and a firmer grasp of the realities than others. That is what they are for. And of course the Lords might do worse than that.

What could be worse?

Why, not content with telling the Commons to mind their Ps and Qs, on pain of dismissal, they might start a constructive programme of their own.

Constructive?

Well, legislative. They might pass a Bill—a series of Bills—through all their stages in their House and send them down to the Commons with a polite label attached, as follows: "Boys, be good, and put these Bills through with neatness and despatch—or out you go at the end of next term!"

Gosh! Could they do that?

Why not? After all, they've had a good bit of bullying to put up with in their time.

But wasn't the Parliament Act designed to stop every possible sort of Peerish nonsense?

The Parliament Act? I was trying to work out if that gave the Commons a graceful retort; but I don't think it works. The Parliament Act, you see, said—what on earth did it say?

I forget; but I think it said that if the Commons passed the same Bill three times—

"In three successive Sessions," wasn't it?

Was it? I forget. Then, whatever the Lords said, it became law.

Something like that. As F. E. Smith said, the only previous precedent was the Bellman in the *Hunting of the Snark*—"What I tell you three times is true."

Well, now, couldn't the Commons pass a Bill to prolong the Life of Parliament for five years, say—

Do you want that?

No, of course not. I'm only thwarting the Lords—And push that Bill through under the Parliament Act?

No, it's too late.

Why?

Because, if I'm right, you've got

to do it in "three successive Sessions"—and there's only about half a one left. Unless the Lords pass another prolonging Act this autumn we perish. Beaverbrook was right. The Lords, if they like to be, are cocks of the Constitution—for the duration.

Shocking!

Well, they've made a pretty good use of their powers and opportunities this war, so don't upset yourself unduly. Anyhow, it shows you what fun one can have with a really elastic Constitution.

One day it will stretch too far.

Cheer up.

How did you enjoy the Beveridge debates?

Couldn't be there. In bed. By the way, I see that the T.U.C. are preparing a report on the Public Schools.

Yes. They want to abolish them.

And I understand that the Headmasters' Association are forwarding a memorandum to the Prime Minister on the place (if any) of the Trade Union in the post-war economic structure.

A. P. H.

Impending Apology

"Despite the fact that two members had left the district, the financial assets were only 5s. less than in 1941."

Provincial Paper.

Glimpses of the Obvious

"Disputes about whether or not a given sum of money is a capital sum or an income sum . . . have always to be determined by deciding whether or not the sum in question is capital or income."—From "Taxation."



William Sculler

"The alert's just been sounded, Sir."



"Of COURSE there's no harm in you ringing me at the office. I've got a marvellous boss—he simply EATS out of my hand."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Dostoevsky

DOSTOEVSKY first became known in England through the translation in 1885 of his novel *Crime and Punishment*. *Sonia*, the prostitute who reads the Gospel of St. John and urges the murderer *Raskolnikov* to redeem his crime by voluntarily accepting its punishment, profoundly affected many readers, including Robert Louis Stevenson, and for a long time Dostoevsky was looked upon as a strange kind of saint, indigenous to Russia, whose all-embracing sympathy solid Anglo-Saxons might admire but could never hope to attain. Since the last war this ingenuous view of Dostoevsky has been dispelled by the publication of his second wife's diaries and other material unknown to his early admirers, and he is now seen to have been a medley of contradictory impulses which he never came within measurable distance of harmonizing. Turgenev called him "the most evil Christian I have ever met," and Strakhov, a Russian critic, told Tolstoi that when he was with Dostoevsky in Switzerland, Dostoevsky treated his servant so abominably that the man at last cried out "I, too, am a human being." Yet Dostoevsky's second wife, in spite of the agonizing experiences to which his mania for gambling exposed her, was devoted to him, affirming in answer to certain allegations made by Strakhov that her husband was the purest being on earth; and a less partial witness, Melchior de Vogüé, spoke of the sweetness which blended with coarseness and subtlety in his expression.

His genius was as turbid as his character, and some of its manifestations do not deserve the tributes they have attracted. In his interesting and thoughtful study of *Dostoevsky* (METHUEN, 7/6), Mr. JANKO LAVRIN strangely fails to see that the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers*

Karamazov is merely the mouthpiece of Dostoevsky's totalitarian strain. Dostoevsky presents his Torquemada as full of pity for the mass of men, whom he rules for their own happiness, knowing them to be too weak for the burden of spiritual freedom imposed on them by Christ—a piece of special pleading which with unimportant variations has been heard from every tyrant in history.

The true field of Dostoevsky's genius was his realism, which was not, in his own words, "an arid observation of everyday trivialities," but an exploration of the underworld of human consciousness. Though he has written greater things, his most characteristic work is *Notes from the Underground*, the confession of a man whose longing for happiness and love is twisted by some kink in his nature into self-torture and cruelty to the woman who thinks she has found in him a refuge from her suffering. H. K.

A Friar in Arakan

The story of a representative seventeenth-century friar, devoted, valiant, unimaginative and far more impressed by the malpractices of the heathen than by their philosophy, *The Land of the Great Image* (FABER, 16/-) sets the figure of Sebastião Manrique four-square in Portuguese Asia and beyond it. What rightly and profoundly interests Mr. MAURICE COLLIS is the Iberian crusade for a world state in Christ and the analogous visions of oriental mystics—both continually frustrated by European violence and greed and Oriental sloth and superstition. He vividly describes the baroque city of Goa from which Manrique set out; Hugli and Dianga to which he was accredited; and the Burmese court at Mrauk-u, where he founded a church and in whose hinterland he had the most heroic of many desperate adventures. Hero he was, *Quixote* with a touch of *Sancho*. And his biographer never wearies of stressing his vigorous sanity in a nightmare world of native magic and poison and imported militarism and avarice. Christianity was already beginning to lose the chance which Manrique's biographer describes St. Francis Xavier as seizing—a chance offered not to *herrenvolk* but to the poor in heart. Manrique himself was murdered in London in 1669; but his job, it is suggested, is still open—on the same conditions. H. P. E.

"The Face is Familiar"*

Dear Mr. NASH, with affection to-day I
Should like to address you as OGDEN, so may I?
Well, OGDEN, my standard in poetry's bilton
The classical works of old-timers like Milton;
The message of these clever young moderns may be marvelous,
but it often escapes me because they will wrap it all
In what reads like a puzzle in unparsable prose, cut into
lengths, without comma or capital;
And so for my shelf of loved bards you are eligible
If only because you are always intelligible.
We've nobody like you, and flatter ourselves by thinking
it's because we're too rational,
But secretly envy our ally a minstrel so Ogdenly Nashional.
And, oh, how I pity the pedants who can't even literature
Freedoms with many conventions of literature!
Of course plenty plagiarize,
But don't worry or ragiarize—
They lack all the flashes
Ogdenfably Nash's.
And oh, by the way, what a pleasure to find, amongst your
refreshment of foolery,
True little poems, like pearls hid in chaff, for those who
know genuine joolery! W. K. H.

*OGDEN NASH (DENT, 7/6)

Efficiency

One is glad to note the revival of the novel-with-a-purpose. Most of us have purposes; and the novel that takes count of them, in its creator and his creations, runs more true to human form than the novel that does not. The purpose of *Ida Cartwright* in *The Bride Comes to Evensford* (CAPE, 3/6) is to turn the *Cartwrights'* small provincial draper's shop into an emporium under her own control. The purpose of Mr. H. E. BATES—"Flying-Officer X"—is to show how Big Business eats up Little Business. The ruthless and far-sighted *Ida* never loses her terrible personality. Her victims—her husband, her mother-in-law, the old employees, the neighbours whose modest shops are engulfed—are individuals all. Yet their story is patently typical. The worst dupes and sufferers are *Ida's* public—the once thrifty contented housewives, who used to buy homely necessities at *Cartwrights'*, metamorphosed by suggestion into glamour-girls whose "standards of living" have far outstripped their households' vital needs. Possibly *Ida's* ultimate fate is less convincing than her masterly origins? But one is grateful for the critical observation that has gone to her career and the grace with which its degradations are conveyed.

H. P. E.

"Never the Twain Shall Meet"

Mr. FRANK CLARE would seem to know his Germany, on the scholastic side, pretty well, and one conjectures that he, like his chief English character, may possibly have put in a semester or so as a teacher in a German school. *The Cloven Pine* (SECKER AND WARBURG, 8/6) is his first novel, and has been recommended by the Book Society—it is a little hard to discover why. The book is a desperately analytical study of *Götz*, a schoolboy of fifteen, and of a half-sentimental friendship between him and *David Beaton*, the young Englishman who is sent over by a German agency just before the Munich affair. The author has no story to tell, but there is a prodigious deal of argument—chiefly between *Beaton* and *Herr Ludwig Kästner*, the Divinity master. But all their talk leads nowhere: the two cannot somehow find a common basis on which to build mutual understanding. And it is the same, in a way, between the English master and his pupil. One gathers that the message of the book is that as with individuals so with the two nations, misunderstanding is inevitable—socially, politically, and philosophically. Mr. CLARE deserves credit for handling his subject seriously, but it must be admitted that his novel makes hard reading at times. The boy's thought and feelings are analysed at inordinate length. To our mind the best part of the book lies in the portraits of the various German teachers, and of the *Biehl-Boidenhausen* family, of which young *Götz* is the chief ornament.

L. W.

Family Act

What a pity it is a later age can seldom enter into the pleasures of an earlier one (life gives us new pleasures, not more of them). To us, Victorian melodrama is comical and therefore entertaining—and so a source of much less enjoyment than if we could take it seriously. The obvious absurdities quite blind us to the occasional excellent theatrical effects. This thought and this regret are much in the mind of anyone reading *The Young Matriarch* (CASSELL, 12/6), because the book has effects of much this kind and high colour. It is all peculiarly—and rather excitingly—theatrical, not merely because the ghost of Mrs. PAT seems as domineering between the lines as she was on the stage. The story rambles accommodately

round the *Rakonitzes*, now in the 'eighties, now at the present day, and has a luxuriance of gesture and emotion unjustly out of fashion in these drably cautious times. Miss G. B. STERN is a perfect dispenser of this abundance—she would have made an ideal complement to Galsworthy—and an adept, besides, at extending the clan. There is a family tree with about one hundred and fifty names, and the malicious may amuse themselves by wondering if this is for the reader's benefit alone. Yet if one never quite distinguishes the lesser members of the tribe, which has branches all over Europe, even the least one bears the authentic *Rakonitz* marks. They are much more lively than the *Forsytes*.

J. S.

According to Plan

In *Bread and Grease Paint* (HUTCHINSON, 8/6) Miss BERTA RUCK gives us the expected in an easy affectionate way. We know, when we meet *Star Robinson* pleading with old-fashioned parents in the first chapter for a chance to fulfil her one dream, to earn her "bread-and-grease-paint" on the stage instead of settling down in some "home of her own with railings round it," that the young lady will not only win through but add a handsome husband to a stage success. We can guess too that love's course will be rather up and down and that there will be misunderstandings, but we may not think of the spy who adds to the complications. The stage people are excellently drawn and the author allows just enough shoddiness to blur the sheen of glamour. And though the heroine might have nipped straight from a band-box to the pages of a woman's magazine, she is an attractive little thing with quick wits and a sense of humour; and she does not throw temperaments or leap to stardom on her first night. In fact, Miss RUCK, competent as usual, has written the sort of book that really nice aunts will give to their favourite nieces.

B. E. B.



"Ah well, 'chacun à son métier,' I suppose."

At the Play

"A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY" (ST. JAMES'S)

Is there anything right with the revival of TURGENEV's masterpiece of a play, *A Month in the Country*, at the St. James's? Some of our co-scribes and brothers in criticism declare roundly that it is both overdressed and underacted. With a diffidence made bold by the consciousness of being correct, we declare roundly that it is neither. Here are some overlooked facts. TURGENEV's characters are described within his own text as rich and luxury-loving, and are therefore far removed from Tchekhov's shabby-genteels. (This astonishingly modern play was written in 1850—nearly twenty years before Tom Robertson brought his tea-pot naturalism to the English theatre, thirty years before Ibsen, forty before Tchekhov, and eighty before that impressionism of new playwrights like M. Bernard of which it repeatedly and amazingly reminds us.) There is therefore well-founded reason for Mr. MICHAEL RELPH's lovely drawing-room, and for the array of elegant gowns which Miss SOPHIA HARRIS has designed for *Natalia Petrovna*.

This same heroine (the great Stanislavsky says so in his book, should further evidence in favour of Mr. EMLYN WILLIAMS's production be wanted) "has passed her life in a luxurious sitting-room, amidst all the conventionalities of a tightly-corseted epoch that was as far as it could be from nature. The proximity of her husband, whom she does not love, and of *Rakitin*, to whom she does not dare to give herself, the friendship of her husband with *Rakitin*, the delicacy of their feelings so far as she is concerned, make her life unbearable." It is translator's English, but its meaning is clear enough.

The translation is sufficiently explicit, again, in a quaint passage which indicates the difficulties the Moscow Art Theatre faced and met when they chose to act this tragedy: "The lace-work of the psychology of love which

Turgenev weaves in such masterly fashion demands a special sort of playing on the part of the actors, a playing that should allow the spectator to see closely into the peculiar design of the emotions of loving, suffering, jealous, male and female hearts." It is this special sort of playing which is attained and which will give so much pleasure to the discerning in the remarkable production at the St. James's. It is most of all attained in the subtle interplaying of *Natalia Petrovna* and her leisurely lover,

rewarding *Doctor Shpighelsky* is at once still and turbulent, like a deep brook whose channel is too narrow for its content. His is a performance of great tact and technical adroitness, full of passion kept icily under control.

Is there, then, anything wrong with this revival of TURGENEV's masterpiece? What about that Chopin mazurka which *Vera* is heard practising in her music-room? The play's period is declared to be "the early 'forties," and we happen to know that that particular mazurka was not published

until long after Chopin's death in 1849. Fortunately there are some forty earlier mazurkas to choose from. And in the matter of the new translation there is a trifling detail about *corncrakes* which *Rakitin* and the boy-tutor, *Beliaev*, consider shooting in the Second Act. It would perhaps be worth while finding out the true equivalent of the Russian word here used. The stilted American translation, on which Miss ELISAVETA FEN and Mr. WILLIAMS have vastly improved in general, says "rail bird." This may have suggested "landrail," which is of course the corncrake. But the corncrake is a bird which is hardly ever seen flying, and is usually to be observed running in alarm from the rare glimpses it allows itself of meddlesome man. We refuse to believe that a sportsman like TURGENEV would take a pot at such a bird, or allow the gentlest of his characters even to entertain the notion.

But near-perfection makes one pernickety. All the minor characters are played to admiration. Mr. RONALD SQUIRE's garrulous doctor twinkles with fun. Mr. TOM GILL and Miss ISOLDE DENHAM do more than well enough by the young people. Mr. MICHAEL SHEPLEY as *Natalia's* husband subdues his natural breeziness into something bothered, Russian, and wholly convincing. Miss ANNIE ESMOND is all the comical-tragical, trouble-making, well-meaning mothers-in-law there ever have been. And last and not least the sunlight (the prosaic electrician's share), whether casting the window's shadow on that drawing-room wall or bathing the garden in its languor, is poetical, diffuse, Turgenevian.

A. D.



A LOVER AND A LAD

<i>Beliaev</i>	MR. TOM GILL
<i>Rakitin</i>	MR. MICHAEL REDGRAVE
<i>Natalia</i>	MISS VALERIE TAYLOR

Rakitin. Two, or possibly three, of our best actresses could bring more art and variety to this exquisite creature. But Miss VALERIE TAYLOR's haunting beauty of face and person sustain her from the moment the first curtain rises, and her art is adequate (with the proviso that "adequate," in so searching and trying a part as this, has to and does mean "considerable"). More than adequate, in the same high sense, is Mr. MICHAEL REDGRAVE's *Rakitin*, an extraordinarily difficult and static character who can easily turn into something as stodgy as a broom-handle. Mr. REDGRAVE (letting us see why Stanislavsky chose to play this part and not the comparatively easy and

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Why Not Worms?

By Smith Minor

PEOPLE are talking a lot about making the world better after the war, and I'm all for it and mean to try and make myself better the momint it's over, no more waiting, but there are some things one wuold like to do evan before

"Man dofs the rayment of the beast
And guns have stopped and bombs
have ceaced,"*

and one of the things is to start some more Sositeties for the Proteckshun of our Lesser Creachers. For instance, why not worms? When I asked Green why not, he said,

"There is a Society for Proteckting animals."

"I grant that," I said, "but do they proteck worms?"

"They ouht to," he said.

"You ouht to stop biting your nails," I said.

(Note. He dose. End of note.)

"I see what you mean," he said, "you mean that if you told the Society that you had seen a man take up a worm and throw it hard at a tree, it landing a smack, the Society wuoldn't do anything about it."

"That's what I mean," I said, "I don't think they wuold, but isn't a worm an animal?"

"Only jest," he said.

"You've got a Sositety for Proteckting children," I said, "but a baby is only jest a person."

"That's true," he said, "but why worms, why not beatles and earwigs?"

"They ouht to be proteckted, too," I said, "but somehow I feal sorrier for worms."

"You mightn't if you knew them better," he said.

"I think I wuold," I said, "but how can one get to know worms better?"

"You might try keaping them," he said.

"That's a good idea," I said, "I will."

Well, after I'd desided that, there were four other things to be desided, they being, i.e.:

(1) Where to get the worms.

(2) How many to get.

(3) What to keap them in.

(4) Where to keap what you kept them in.

And as I worked in that order, it will be best to tell you in that order. So, begining with, i.e.:

(1) This was easy. I desided to get them out of our garden, we having one.

(2) This wasn't so easy. At first I thort fifty, but then I thort, "If I have fifty how will I know wich is wich, are there so many different lengths?" So then I thort twenty-five, but evan that seamed a lot to look after, and then I thort of one, and the more you think of one the more you like it, becorse when there is only one of a thing it seams more valueble. What I mean is, say there were twenty-five Greens, you cuoldn't chumn up with them all. But then I thort, "Will it be lonely?" so in the end I thort of two, and after a bit more thort I desided on it. Well, then of corse I had to go out and get them, and beleive it or not, *comment dit*, I dug for 14½ minits before I found any, when as a rule there are such sworms it's all you can do not to hurt them. But sudenly I came upon two together, and they were jest what I wanted becorse (a) they were two, (b) they alredy knew each other, (c) one was fat and the other was thin, there was no mistaking wich was wich, (d) the fat one had sort of brown rings round it, and (e) the thin one was all over little wite spots, I thort at first it was ill, but it wasn't. I called them Phlotsome and Jetsome at once, not that I mean these two cleaver entertainers have rings and spots, but, well, that's what I called them.

(3) I had a cage in wich I once kept a bird I found, it died, I was sorry, but that was no good becorse evan the fat one cuold of got throuh the bars, so then I thort of a box with holes for breathing throuh, but then I thort, "What is the good of keaping worms in a box if you can't see them, you might as well keap goldfish in America," so then I thort of the box having a window in it and went to a boy called Rockhorn who is good at that sort of thing, and ofered him three ascid drops and a penny dated 1864 if he wuold do it, he saying he wuold if I made it five ascid drops, I then saying I only had four, and he then saying he wuold do it for four, and I then saying all right. If you think that seams a lot, well, it did, but he made a window that cuold open and close, in fact it was so hot that I promised to menshun his name, wich I have done, but to save you looking back, and also becorse I promised to do it twice if he'd put a line of paint round it, the window, it is Rockhorn.

(4) Some poeple don't like worms, so you can't leave them about, not evan in a box, or keap them in a

window like, say, a parot, so I desided to keap mine in the garden shed in the day, and in my bedroom at night in case of a frost.

Well, after all that was finished we got going and I began to study them. They were a bit dull, becorse worms don't do much, and you don't have to keap on feading them like, say, hens. What you do, or anyhow what I did, was to put a lot of earth and leaves and stough in the box and let them get on with it. But thouh they were dull, I soon got to like them, espeshully Phlotsome, becorse sometimes when I said its name it raized the end that I think was the head end, mind you, not always, but about once in thirty. Jetsome didn't, I think it was deaf, but once when I touched it it nearly made a figger eight, wich I thort was rather interesting. I cuoldn't help liking Phlotsome best, but of corse I liked Jetsome too.

Another thing they did was to sometimes get tied up together. They both did this, well, of corse, it had to be both. I didn't much like untying them, but you cuoldn't leave them like that, and presently I found how to do it with a pensil.

Well, everything went all right and they seamed as happy as I expect worms can be as far as I cuold judge till the fifth day, or it might of been the sixth, but I'm almost sure it was the fifth. Anyhow, once when I went to the shed on wichever day it was I found the window had come open, and lo! they had gone!

Now the gentel reader may think, "What did it matter, he cuold easily get two more," but if you lose a dog you are fond of do you jest get another? No, you don't, and it is the same with worms. So I began looking for them in the garden, hoping they had kept on top, and thinking they wuold of. You see I had taken them out once to give them a test, don't forget I was studdying worms, and I found out that wile worms that live in the earth take 3½ minits to go down, worms that live in boxes take 46 minits, they seaming to have forgotten the way, and so I worked it out like this, i.e.: If Phlotsome and Jetsome had been gone 46 minits, well, they were gone, but if they'd been gone less than 46 minits then I still had what was left of the minits to look for them in. If you don't get this the first time read it again, and you properly will.

*A boy named Stenning wrote this, I never cuold of. *Auther.*



"... To understand the position, try to visualize an inverted bottle-neck with its lower edges impinging on the Dneiper bend, joined by a crescent-shaped outline with its inner bulge threatening the enemy's hedgehogs."

Well, anyhow, after not finding them in our own garden I went to one of the next-door ones, there being plenty of places where worms could riggle through, but a servant came after me and said,

"What are you looking for?"

"Two worms," I said.

"What are you talking about?" she said.

"Worms," I said.

Then some other people came out and I thought I'd better go and try the other next-door garden, and this time it was better because an old man lives there, and he seemed more interested.

"We must certainly look for them," he said, "but how will you know them?"

"One has rings round it," I said, "and the other spots."

"Oh, then it should be easy," he said.

"Do you really mean that, sir?" I said, hoping he did.

"To look for them," he said.

"I see what you mean," I said.

"What do I mean?" he said.

"Don't you know?" I said.

"Perhaps," he said, "but I want to know if you know?"

"Well," I said, "it would be easy to look for a red elephant, but not easy to find it."

"Yes, that is what I mean," he said.

He was jolly desent, coming with me, and we found any amount of worms, but not Phlotsome and Jetsome. After 46 minutes I knew it was no good going on, so we stopped, and then he said,

"Now please tell me why you have this pashun for worms?"

"I don't know if you'd call it a pashun, sir," I said, "but I've always felt a bit sorry for them, and so I thought that if I kept them I would know more about them so I could talk better about them, and perhaps even write a book about them so that other people would know more about them."

"Would that help them?" he said.

"You never know," I said, "Mr. Huxley has written a book about ants, so I expect he thought it might. And then what about Humperdinck and bees?"

"Come in and have an orange aid," he said, seaming I thought a bit upset.

Well, Phlotsome and Jetsome had gone, and it was no good looking for them any more. But if the gentel reader should ever come across them, I should like to tell him or her that a Reword has been offered of threepence (3d.) each, and the fat one with rings was 5 inches long and the thin one with spots was 11½. So you can see they were beauties.

Of course, they may have grown.

o o

Woman-Power

To the Local Manager, Ministry of Labour and National Service.

Re: CLERICAL VACANCY—SECRETARY.

DEAR SIR,—I am reluctantly compelled to write you in connection with the above matter, as I feel sure that there are certain pertinent facts of which you cannot possibly be aware.

You will doubtless appreciate that I

refer to the substitute you have sent me for Miss Christine Chalmers, who was, until you removed her, my very efficient secretary.

In the first place, I must seriously question your judgment as to the suitability of a lady who is obviously well over ninety-six and who admits that she has had no recent experience of secretarial work.

Secondly, I resent strongly her insistence on wearing her bonnet and shawl during office hours. While I do all in my power to ensure the comfort and well-being of my staff, I think you will agree that this is somewhat disconcerting, not only to me but also to the many visitors who have occasion to call upon me during the day.

Thirdly, I have to point out that dictation to her is practically impossible, since she will not relinquish either the massive walking-stick she carries or the "hold-all" or reticule in which she appears to have most of her worldly possessions, and consequently cannot manage a shorthand notebook.

Even if she could I should find it quite beyond me to speak for any length of time into the tremendous ear-trumpet without which she is completely deaf.

These points, I am confident, will at least prove to you that your selection, as a substitute, leaves much to be desired. In addition to them, however, the ensuing account should give you a fairly clear idea of her shortcomings as a secretary.

At approximately 10 A.M. on the morning of her second day in my employ I gave her a letter from one of my most exacting customers and asked her to acknowledge it in the usual way.

A little while later I learned that she had left the office for an unknown destination. The following morning upon arrival she drew from the reticule or hold-all a large bundle of crow-quills, which she proceeded to sharpen, much to the interest and amazement of the assembled staff.

A day and a half later I found on my desk a manuscript, beautifully inscribed and illuminated, reading as follows:

"DEAR SIRs,—We, Messrs. C. Q. Bogshaft and Coy. Ltd., are in receipt of your communication of the fifteenth instant and would state that we find it Unspeakably Gratifying.

"Be assured that, in spite of the Accumulation of Business and the Multiplicity of Details which assail us at present, we shall spare No Effort to give it our Undivided Attention and Immediate Consideration.

"Be assured that we shall always be prepared to receive the Honour and

Benefit of your counsels, and hope to hold Further Communication with you in connection with this matter in the Near Future.

"We are, Dear Sirs, most truly your
Humble and Obedient Servants,
Messrs. C. Q. BOGSHAFT & COY. LTD."

I need hardly point out that an epistle of this nature is scarcely conducive to the war effort, but she is so patently proud of the achievement that I have not the heart to disillusion her.

In conclusion, may I express to you my extreme embarrassment at being continually addressed as "Honoured Sir," a circumstance which causes a great deal of unpleasantness among my fellow directors.

Will you please, therefore, make the necessary arrangements to provide me with a more suitable secretary at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully,

C. Q. BOGSHAFT.

An Interrupted Story

IT was always a gloomy railway station even in peace-time, and now that they had replaced the roof-glass with opaque strips it approximated to the infernal, especially when an engine unexpectedly blew off steam or the fireman clanked his shovel. Five or six of us were grouped in front of the Arrivals board. I suppose that we were all waiting for the same train, since there was only one marked overdue on the board. It was fifty minutes late.

In my case standing in front of the board was the last hope; I had exhausted all the other methods of

passing away time. In the refreshment-room I had spent ten minutes leading the contemplative life before daring to touch a cup of tea shot from the urn; I had stared long and hard at a showcase full of grates, had spent fourpence on the only automatic machine working on the station—my old friends the little cricketers—and finally had gravitated to the board.

The "surround" was depressing. Apart from the gloom it was raining outside and the roof dripped moisture. We in front of the board snuggled as far as possible into our greatcoats and glared at the chalked figures. For all the movement we made we might have been in aspic. At last someone spoke. It was the little man with the Robey-ish eyebrows and cascading moustache. The speech was very much resented, we others only desiring to sink in our misery.

"I once waited for a train wot was two hours and three-quarters late," the little man said, appearing to smack his lips at the thought.

A wriggle of moisture had just passed down my neck, and the remark was of little interest to me. None the less the demands of comity urged that someone should reply, and, looking round, I saw that I must be the one. But hard as I racked my brains I could think of nothing to say. My mind was in a tiny "lag" or vacuum, and although I perspired in the effort to say something, I could not. I recall having the same experience in the presence of my wife's father upon being ushered in to ask for his daughter's hand. On the present occasion, however, I was saved by the elephants.

There were three of them and they came in from the station approach and passed out of sight along the line of platforms. The group came to life and



left the board, with the exception of the little man. We turned a corner and saw that the elephants were to be loaded into a huge van. The drop door was down on the platform and acted as a slope for the beasts to pass into the van. The leading elephant put its foot on the slope and tested it, exactly as a small boy tests ice on a pond. It meditated lengthily and then turned round and, passing through the platform gate, lumbered out of the station with the other two following it, despite the frantic exertions of the keeper.

A crowd hastened to the front of the station, but the elephants had vanished. We of the group drifted back to the board. The little man was still there, still staring at the chalked fifty. We gathered round him. Personally, I looked so hard at the fifty that when I shut my eyes it appeared as a sort of green neon. I wondered what the reactions would be if a porter came along and thrust us deeper into the abyss by altering it to sixty. Or—heaven forbid!—seventy. Contrariwise, supposing the driver had gone mad and it turned to thirty? I was thinking thus when the little man spoke again. Perhaps he did not know that the rest of us had been away.

"It was round about one Chrissmas," he said. "I was awaiting of the wife, she'd been down Wales."

I decided that this time I must force myself to say something, but first I looked round. And I saw that I was saved. The burly man in the square hat who had patently done his best to cultivate a Churchillian appearance, even down to a tiny V in his lapel; he, I perceived, was about to take the

mantle from my shoulders. He girded himself and was on the point of speaking when—the elephants reappeared. Again we left the little man in front of the board.

The station officials by now had

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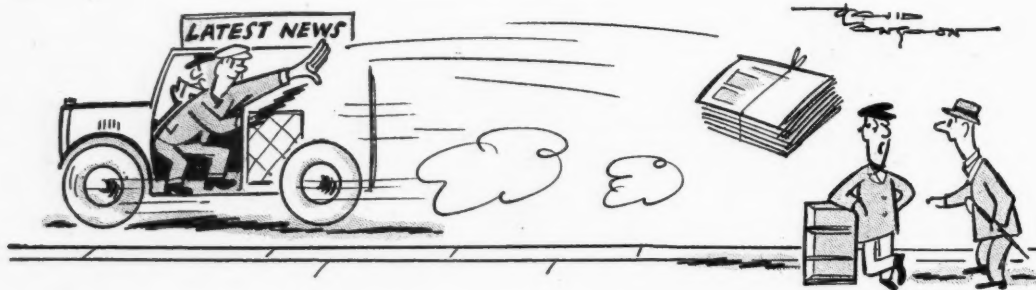
strengthened the slope leading into the van. The leading elephant repeated the performance of making a test. And again it would not play ball. But this time the platform gate had been closed, so the elephants drew away and clumped themselves round a pillar. The slope was then additionally

strengthened; adequately, this time. The leader was brought forward and it made the opening gambit with its fore-foot. Gradually it put two legs on the slope. It profoundly considered the situation and then gently ambled inside. The other two docilely followed. The van door was closed, and we of the group went back to the board.

The little man had not moved. The figure was still fifty. I thought of the intuition of animals and of the ages it had taken to evolve. My mind went back to a story-book of my childhood, and somehow I began to visualize myself as one of the characters. I wore a turban, but am not sure about my jewels; in any case my favourite elephant refused to cross a plank bridge and, being very weary at the end of a long journey, I was harsh with Tia, as my elephant was called. Events quickly proved, however, that enemies of mine had purposely weakened the bridge, and afterwards I could never make up to Tia for the injustice I had done her. No more had she to carry felled trees, nor did I visit neighbouring princes on her back. She spent the rest of her days in luxury in a private grove. Special servants were in attendance on her every beck and trumpet. I daily superintended her bath. No hands fed her pet delicacies but mine. Yet the reproach in those eyes

I was immersed thus when the little man spoke for the last time. He slowly turned and regarded us all, saw that we were the old originals, and completed his story.

"And when that train *did* come in," he announced, "bust me!—the wife wasn't on it after all."



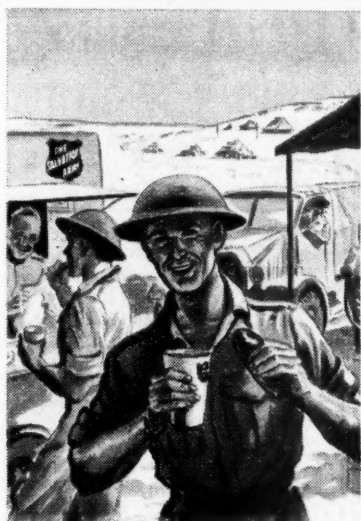
"They'll be along any minute now."

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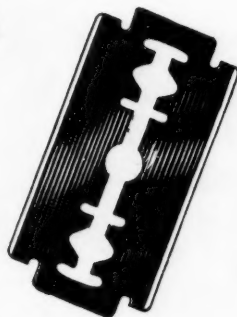
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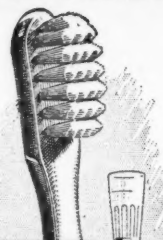
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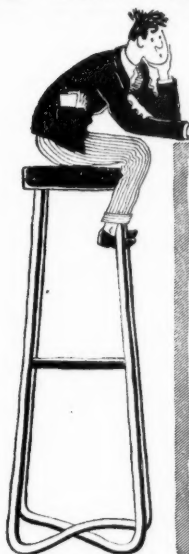
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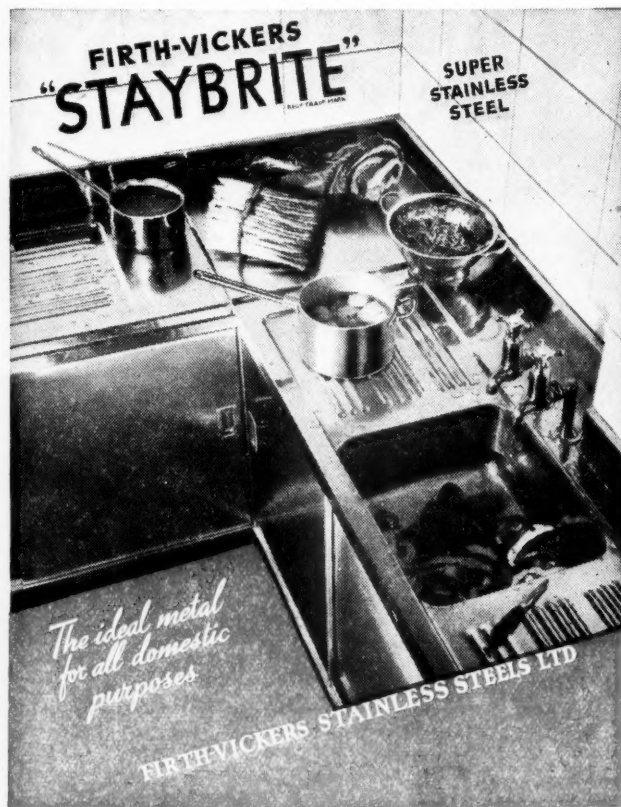
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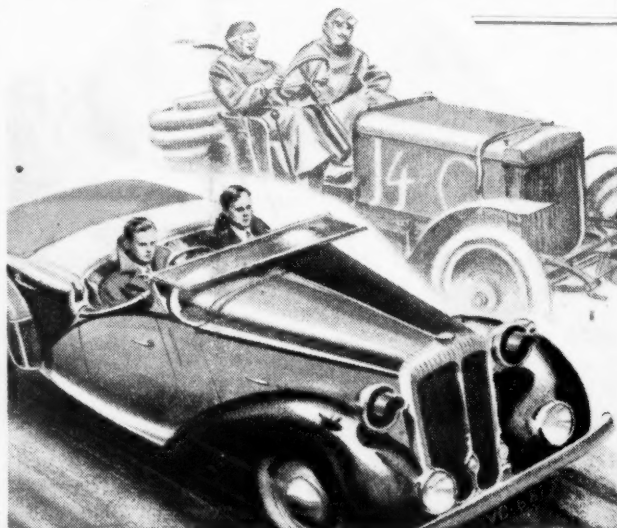
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